YOU ARE NEVER ALONE

LOWELL RUSSELL DITZEN

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YOU ARE NEVER ALONE

by Lowell Russell Ditzen

In his new book Dr. Lowell Russell Ditzen, noted Presbyterian minister and author of *Personal Security Through Faith,* brings his wisdom and understanding to bear on one of the great problems of modern society — loneliness. Those who feel alone, and those who have turned loneliness to a greater self-fulfillment, will find in these pages a never-ending source of inspiration and reassurance.

Dr. Ditzen has known sorrow and despair in his own life as in the lives of those to whom he ministers. His book is the record of what his experience has taught him: that even in time of pain or loss, when every man seems alone, he can still find in his solitude a source of understanding to enrich his days. In the simplicity and assurance of his counsel lies its strength.

Solitude, Dr. Ditzen holds in his appraisal of the causes and effects of loneliness, is truly a creative force for those who can turn it to their own advantage. In solitude, if we are not afraid, we can discover the art of appreciation and can best come to terms with a seemingly inscrutable universe. And in it we can discover new ideas, great thoughts within us that the bustling everyday world often suppresses.

(continued on back flap)

You Are Never Alone

By the Same Author:

Personal Security Through Faith

You Are Never Alone

by LOWELL RUSSELL DITZEN, D.D.

Pastor, The Reformed Church of Bronxville, New York

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Preface

Recently, in evaluating themes used in many television dramas today, Jack Gould observed that littleness and failure in man seemed to be an indispensable element. The writer of TV plays, "in the first act explains that the Little Person never was anything; in the second act, that he isn't anything, and, in the third, that he never will be anything." The cause of the hero's failure, Mr. Gould goes on to say, is loneliness. "A hero's lonely when he's in a crowd and when he's by himself. He's lonely, his girl is lonely, his friends are lonely. Everybody's lonely, including the television viewer." While this may be an extravagance on Mr. Gould's part, he is making a valid and significant point. Loneliness is widespread.

David Seabury cites a thousand people who were asked why they sought psychological aid. Heading the list, and leaving all other reasons far behind, is this: "Loneliness, Concern About Self." Eight hundred and forty-nine of the thousand individuals who sought psychiatric counsel put their check-mark here.

There is an amazing response to books and articles that propose to help people come to terms with themselves. This is an important consideration. The way we use our solitude determines our personal well-being, and social progress as well. There can be no ordered world without ordered individuals. If individuals have no understanding of themselves, how can we expect marriages and communities and nations to work together harmoniously? Human aloneness is a fact. But until we, one by one, accept that fact and learn to use

it to our advantage, we are incompetent to meet life on its terms and fulfill ourselves.

We need not face the prospect of a lifetime of loneliness, for within us are ever-present resources which can enable us to walk the world with grace and dignity. In our personal solitude we can find a sustaining togetherness that will enrich, direct, and support us. Recognizing this fact, Professor Floyd Sampson counseled, "We must withdraw into the sanctuary of our own spirit, there to view in perspective the objective facts and events of life. Only so can life exhibit again to us its inherent integrity, significance, potentiality."

I have asked people, from many walks of life, to share with us their experiences and thoughts on this subject. The Lord has not confined wisdom to the philosopher or the theologian. Anyone who has dealt with his or her aloneness successfully has a contribution to make. To them I express my deep appreciation.

It has been said that writing is a lonesome work. This book was written at a farm in the Adirondack foothills, and I felt the truth of that statement as I isolated myself each day. But it isn't altogether so. From my window I saw the trees and the stream that hold happy memories. Daisies in June and, later, goldenrod affirmed that life is worthwhile and that man has a deep kinship with creation and the Creator. Our eleven-year-old son's progress on painting the fences and two-year-old daughter's excited report on a bird that flew into her playpen were with me in my seemingly lonely cell, and gave me a sense of continuity with the world beyond my study. That personal experience makes me hopeful that the contents of this volume will become a reality for you, as it has for me.

LOWELL RUSSELL DITZEN

Arrivederci
Cold Brook, New York

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You Are Never Alone

Chapter 1

Every Man Seems Alone

Great sculpture is appealing to me. In the Vatican I stood long before the Torso Belvidere admiring the rippling muscles, the great chest, which once were caressed by the finger tips of the blind Michelangelo. I can now close my eyes and see the Wingless Victory, so beautifully exhibited at the head of a stairway in the Louvre in Paris. It causes the mind and spirit to soar.

But in the Art Institute of Chicago is a work by Lorado Taft that portrays in marble the problem with which this book is concerned. Around a block of rough stone are figures of men and women. They are in repose; yet there is a sad solemnity about each one individually and the work as a whole. Hands may be touching or seeking the touch of another's hands. There is a relatedness in the figures; but you do not get a sense of closeness or togetherness. The eyes of each are closed in meditation, or gaze with quiet questioning into the mysteries of the unknown. How fitting that this work has been entitled "The Solitude of the Soul."

A friend recently sent me a picture of that sculpture and remarked in his letter that the feeling of aloneness communicated in "The Solitude of the Soul" seemed to be related to man's spiritual nature. There is truth in his observation that "the ones who are more highly developed mentally and spiritually may feel it perhaps more keenly than others. Christ on the cross must have experienced it more deeply than anyone before or since His agony."

If you have seen Lorado Taft's work you have heard it speak of an experience that is your own. You have known times of deep loneliness, times when the you that is most deeply you could not be communicated to another. And if with your eyes you have not seen Taft's truth in stone, you know the truth in your heart.

In childhood we are first introduced to the feeling of "aloneness." We come into the world helpless and dependent, and adjustment to new environments and experiences is never-ending—as poignant in later years as it is in our youth. And not often can we reach across these years to help those who are just starting out on their journey through life.

Marguerite Bro tells of a child away from home writing to her mother, "Mommie, I'm lonesome. Deep down inside I'm terribly young and afraid. I feel so unsure of myself and so helpless." Those words might be written by an individual at eighty as well as eight.

Some time ago in the country I came across a neighbor's lad curled up by a creek. He was hugging his dog and tears stained his cheek.

"Billy, what in the world are you doing down here? Planning to do some fishing?"

"No, no fishing."

"Anything the matter that I might help?"

"No, nobody can help."

"Would you like to just talk about it? Sometimes just putting things out in the open is good."

" 'Twon't do no good. It's just that nobody understands me. Dad gets mad. Mom's too busy. I try to tell them about me, but the right words don't come out, and even if they did it wouldn't make any difference."

"Well, your dog, he understands you, doesn't he?"

"He may want to. But I don't think he can. He has lots of things on his mind. And most of the time I can't even understand him. So if me, a human being, can't always figure him out, how can he, a dog, figure me?"

Not having the answer to the question, I did what most adults do: I changed the subject and morally ran away. But I was thinking of Taft's "Solitude of the Soul" and of children who put out tentative feelers for understanding and so often obtain no response.

Many parents have earnestly tried to seek closeness to their children, and have found only unbridgeable chasms separating them. Perhaps they will understand why Kahlil Gibran wrote:

Your children are not your children
They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself.
They come through you, but not from you.
And though they are with you, yet they belong not to you.

We talk about the brashness and sureness of youth. But even the briefest introduction to psychology should enable us to see that the loud self-confidence of young people is a sign of a soul that hasn't come to terms with itself. It is a form of compensation for an inner vulnerability.

And at this other end of the scale, the aloneness of the aged imparts its own particular sadness. The circle of activity has grown smaller and smaller. Relatives die, friends are fewer,

the family scatters. An increasing apprehension of being useless can undermine optimism and hope. An older friend said to me, "Yes, I've known about the sense of aloneness all my life. But never more keenly than now. My children are nice to me. I know they love me. But I'm a problem to them . . . I'd like to talk to them, share my heart, but when I try, I can see that they don't understand . . ."

Not just at certain chronological periods of our life do we know the feeling of solitariness, but throughout the years we encounter it.

The young person reaching adulthood finds that there are often long and lonely stretches. Some whom I have counseled, have passed what they consider "the marriageable age." Their friends already have homes and children and new responsibilities. The loss of the old gang creates the necessity for another adjustment for those who are left.

In the middle years there are deeply disturbing times when we try to re-evaluate life in terms of what we have and what we desire. This can precipitate a peculiar sense of isolation, for no one else can answer the questions we pose for ourselves in these lonely hours. I remember a man who was at the peak of his powers, highly successful in his chosen career, with a beautiful home and family, who said to me: "I thought this was what I wanted. I have it. But for some reason it just hasn't come off. I think to myself, 'you have what you worked for,' and then everything I've gained or accomplished seems to say back to me, 'so what?' "

And women, whose youthful dreams and visions are sealed forever behind the unscalable walls of time, must learn to somehow gracefully accept the realities of their existence, thereby finding a newer, deeper meaning to life. Often specific domestic, physiological, or economic problems, produce an additional strain, and life assumes a bleak and dreary cast.

One woman confided to me that at such a time in her life her own mother was dying of cancer. She said, "I feel badly that my husband has to be left out of my inner turmoil. But I don't know how to share it with him and he seems to be at an equal loss to help me. It makes me realize that each person has to fight these hard changes in life alone. Just as I am fighting my battle alone, and my husband stands by, so my mother must fight her pain alone—and I can only stand by her."

After her mother's death she wrote to me: "How marvelously she fought her lonely battle. She never said 'a mumblin' word.' She was calm and unafraid, right to the end. She couldn't lick cancer. But it most assuredly didn't lick her."

Pain is a lonely thing. You can be surrounded with friends, enfolded with the love of someone especially near, given the best of medical and spiritual care, and yet you can say, "This sense of lonely struggle and fear I just can't communicate to anyone."

Success can produce isolation of the spirit. More than a dozen years ago, on coming to New York City, I met two of the "alonest" people I have ever known. One was a man who was head of one of the largest business concerns in our nation; the other was a lady whose palatial residence identified her as one of our wealthiest women. Those two, surrounded by people and having what the world labeled success, were very much alone.

And many people constantly wage a war against depression when poverty prevents them from interacting with society, restricting even the smallest pleasures in life.

It's easy to forget or fail to appreciate the acute aloneness of a leader who must make a fateful decision. But we can catch a glimpse of it as we read the biography of Lincoln and

see him in silent walks or solitary prayer, seeking the right answers to questions for which no one else could make the decisions. And he alone had to bear the consequences. More than once men have risen to a high position and found themselves unprepared for the loneliness of their pinnacle.

The death of someone near, or facing the fact of our own inevitable death, heightens our lonely feelings. On a television program some months ago a husband, just informed of his wife's death in an automobile accident, was being comforted by friends and family. He slowly raised his head, looked at the people around him and spoke, not to them but to the emptiness of time and space, "No matter who's with you, you're alone."

The pursuit of knowledge, the development of our convictions, the achievement of some goal, are obtained only by following a solitary course. Discoveries in science, mountains climbed, and masterpieces written and painted come not from those who follow the broad highways of the populace. The way is hard, the path unbroken. They walk as do you and I when we would find a bit of truth or come closer to our brightest dreams.

I shall never forget talking to a ten-year-old girl whose parents were being divorced. The supports of family togetherness on which she had relied were being torn away. In a place where all had been familiar and friendly, now she felt she was a stranger in an unknown place. Only the physical reality of the house recalled what once had been a home.

Some time ago I saw a young man in a New York restaurant. He kept looking at the diners nearby, seemingly seeking a familiar face. He buttonholed the waiter and engaged him in conversation, more interested in talking than in eating his food.

"What can you tell me about that young man?" I asked the waiter.

"Oh, he's some yokel from the Midwest, come here to go to school. That kid talks more to me than all the rest of the customers I handle in an evening. Kinda pathetic though. The poor kid's just lonesome as hell."

The last descriptive adjective may not have been ill-chosen. Many a traveler experiences this sense of isolation in a place where there are different customs, a strange language, and perhaps even an attitude of suspicion toward himself and his nation.

I think too of the apartness of the prisoner, the crippled, the mentally deficient, the individual who may be excluded from the freedom of association and opportunity because of his racial or religious, political or social background. What sharp-spiked walls "the nice people" erect to safeguard society against these "undesirables"—effectively assigning them to a limbo on earth.

Circumstances and environment create the awareness of being alone; however, there is a more subtle feeling that cannot be explained by what happens to us on the outside. There are moods and states of loneliness that are rooted in our nature. Faith Baldwin wrote that "it doesn't happen just on dark days. It can pierce you like a knife on a spring morning or a golden summer afternoon, no matter where you are or what you are doing." All of us know what she meant.

In my particular calling I have to deal with individuals who lay before me their personal problems and disturbances of which I cannot speak to others. It is a lonely seeking that must be made in an attempt to be helpful. Then, too, the disciplines of my work and the expectations of other people require that personal desires must often be put aside. I may

feel like saying on a Saturday evening, "Already I've put in a seventy-hour week. There'll be no sermon tomorrow morning. I'm taking my family to the movies like the butcher, baker, and candlestick-maker." But I don't say it and must meet this impulse alone.

While such responses may be understood in light of the factors that cause them, others cannot. On the golf course or in the midst of writing that moves along and which should bring exhilaration—a wave of sadness can sweep over the spirit.

My friend, Julian Bryan, who travels throughout the world, making documentary movies of other lands and people, once wrote me: "You can be lonely in a crowd, in your own home, or in your own business, when you seem unable to communicate or to share with people close to you. I think this happens to all of us."

In honesty, however, I have talked with some people who say this feeling is unknown to them. A wonderful man whom I've admired for years assures me that loneliness and aloneness are problems he has never faced. For more than twenty years he arose at five o'clock in the morning for a long day's work. Now, close to eighty years of age, he arises at six to get his family, household, and three farms, as he puts it, "in order for the day."

He has known sorrow. His wife died when his children were small and he took on the role of both father and mother, which he has filled with loving and patient care. If you could see him and talk to him for a few minutes, you might understand why he says he's never been lonely. His eyes are still crisp and fresh, the deeply etched lines on forehead, around the eyes and mouth, are stamped there not by perplexity but by laughter and expectancy. He cups your hand in both of

his on greeting. You know he feels! His zest and sympathy warm you like a crackling fireplace on a blizzard day.

As you learn to know him you recognize qualities of his heart and mind that have kept loneliness away. He has never indulged in self-pity. Self-centeredness he cordially despises. He works and works hard. He has never belittled the routines of the day, nor let eagerness about tomorrow die out. He meets responsibility not as a burden to be carried but as a privilege to be accepted. He has found and cultivated the secret of losing his life, only to find it. These and other factors, which may enable us to cope with our aloneness, we will do well to consider carefully. You and I can learn from him.

But this man is an exception. The overwhelming majority of us are familiar with the feeling that we must walk much of life's way alone.

One of the prime requirements for mental and spiritual health lies in coming to terms with inner isolation. The degree of poignancy may vary and it may take many forms. Some are made afraid by it. Others are frustrated and embittered by it. And there are those who refuse to recognize it and waste their energies and time in seeking from others what they can achieve only within themselves. But we must all learn that this inner adjustment with and to ourselves is the hub on which the spokes of our attitude, our work, our happiness, are held in good and useful balance.

Recently I had an opportunity to talk with J. C. Penney in his office in New York. It was morning. His desk was stacked with mail accumulated during a trip just completed. Yet there was no sense of pressure or hurry. Composure and kindness came from him as he put aside a report he had been reading to chat with me. The room was unpretentious. Family pictures, a sketch of the Memorial Home Commu-

nity in Florida (a residence for retired ministers, full-time church workers and their wives, which he provided in memory of his own father and mother), and a bronze figure of a famous bull of his were caught by the sweep of the eye. But the man himself, responding softly and directly to my questions, was the room's real adornment.

Mr. Penney said that during the early part of his career he relied too much on himself. Money and the success it brought were given too great an importance. When the Depression almost completely destroyed everything he had built up, teachings from his parents were lighted up with a meaning that he had not realized before. The recognition that one "could not act like a baby" before the blows of circumstance, but that a man at the hardest times had to be his most manly, inspired him. He recalled there was a humbling sense of his own inadequacy. But also the insight came, clear and strong, that living closer to God could give man an adequacy for all circumstances.

As I rode through the jammed streets of New York I wrote on a slip of paper: "Mr. Penney truly says he was not lonely in his times of sorrow and failure. But he *was* very alone. Yet there is so much more to the picture than that. Not just solitariness. Agreed, no loneliness, like the faces I see now and again in the throngs from this taxi window. *But he, like every man who masters loneliness, was not alone!* Perhaps the fact that circumstances forced him back to a harsh aloneness, brought him close to companionships which he earlier had neglected. Could it be that he discovered then the inner supportive powers which only solitude permits one to find?"

The answer to the question is, "Yes." In our moments of deepest aloneness we may discover the truth that we need not be alone.

Put it down clearly, you and I are not alone in our alone-

ness. Everyone is alone. True, we can communicate ourselves in part to others. There may be brief moments of rare and ecstatic wonder when we feel we are known and that we know. But how quickly the veil falls!

The truth is this—that in birth, in death, in pain, in our questionings, in our deepest longings, we all say, "I go this way alone." I believe that there is a comfort, dignity, solemnity, in this fact. For we walk on the solitary road that every man must go.

Some have brought back treasures that only the lonely seeker can find. Others affirm that only in this way can you find peace with yourself and your heart's deepest desire.

It is a wide company in which we travel. And the many who have won victories of the spirit make me feel that it is a grand company too.

Perhaps the remembrance of those others may make the words a special blessing: "You Are Never Alone."

Chapter 2

Our Greatest Asset

A short time ago I toured the modern city of Haifa in Israel. The industrial district compares with that of many American cities. Storage tanks were dimmed by the haze from large manufacturing plants, and trucks growled on the highways under their burdens of raw material or finished products.

Only a few miles away from this efficiently planned area is the ancient port of Acre. Some of the old fortifications facing the sea are twenty-five feet thick, holding back the waves that break against their base, just as the walls and their defenders have withstood generations of armies that crashed against them. The blood of Phoenicians, Romans, Turks, French, and British was shed here. Those battlements saw the proud banners of the Crusaders. They witnessed the retreating tricolor of France as Napoleon wearily turned back from a fruitless attempt to take Acre. The crack of cannon and the clash of sword, only echoes now, are as much a part of the walls as the old mortar.

Later, at dusk, we visited the area of Mount Carmel, which for centuries has been a place for solitude and quiet reflection. Carmel, hallowed by generations of individuals who

lived there in solitary caves, to this day offers monastics the seclusion they seek.

As the Mediterranean waters glowed a brilliant orange-red in the last fiery rays of the setting sun, I understood more than ever before why the soul responds to the natural beauty of this retreat.

Then we saw, as though it were in another world, the curve of Haifa harbor below us. The streets and highways were filled with moving vehicles and figures. Offices and factories as well as homes were alight. From the silent height on which we stood they appeared ceaselessly busy.

It seemed to me that those contrasting scenes offered a symbol of man's existence. There is a place and a need for Haifa, with its call for work, challenging man to struggle, to conquest. But there is a place and a need for Carmel too.

The Haifas of life can make us automatons. Bustling with other people, letting our thoughts and speech be a reflection of the garble around us, will turn us into straw men. If life is absorbed merely in getting things or fighting to keep what we have, our souls can wither. The fulfilled manhood of which we are capable, and which is our most priceless possession, will never be attained unless we make use of our aloneness, as those who have come to Carmel have done.

Haven't you had bright thoughts that came to you from out of the unknown? Haven't you responded to some idea or some fine act? But the aura of it is all too quickly lost in noise and activity, like the meadow mists that soon burn off before the morning sun. These are intimations of what Carmel can cultivate and which Haifa may wither.

The Bible tells us that the way we meditate in our silences determines what we become: "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." If no effort is made to deal with our aloneness constructively, we let chance take over. By not building our

inner aloneness we discover, too late, that there is nothing to strengthen us when we most need it.

We make a tragic, sometimes irreparable mistake if we are afraid of our aloneness and try to escape from seeing our true selves. Yet I see so many who listen to the words of other people, when the best words for them are within. They dress and speak and act not the way they want to, but by what they assume others find most acceptable. This is not the road to life. It is the way of death.

Of course, I know that simply because an individual faces solitude, he or she is not automatically a better or more real person. Our most cruel and vile thoughts can be born in aloneness. The one who commits suicide usually does not reach his desperate state of mind in gay company, and the blackest crimes are nurtured in solitariness.

There is much more than just getting off by ourselves. But we must do that. Examination of ourselves, and of the values we want to live by, is indispensable to becoming the real human beings we were intended to be.

The great potential within us has been manifested in others who sought solitude and out of their aloneness brought forth great good.

The history of the arts and sciences is filled with such individuals. Bach is one. He had close camaraderie with people, but it was the communion with his inner self that gave birth to the finest organ music of the ages. Father of a large family, he was frequently accompanied in his journeys by one or more of his sons. He loved to putter in the garden and might frequently leave the composing of a "chorale that was to charm the centuries," to rock a fretful baby or cut a piece of brown bread for a daughter who couldn't wait until dinnertime.

But at night, when all were abed, Bach would walk alone

under the stars. His figure was as lonely as the shadowy trees he passed under. But in the quiet he sensed the grand order of the universe and immortalized for all time the exalted harmonies he heard.

Listening to the pristine melodies of a Bach composition, we can feel his oneness with the rhythm and wonder of creation; the music speaks to our own souls of the dignity and beauty and goodness of God and life—and of the goodness that is within all of us. Then we realize some of the precious contributions of men who walked alone.

As we read the story of Jesus we are struck with the long periods of quiet during His lifetime. For thirty years He lived a secluded life in Nazareth. There are long views from the slopes of the village. Across the plain beyond passed one of the main trade routes of the ancient world. From that vicinity we can still see the rising Judean and Samarian hills and the snow-capped crown of Mount Hermon, the highest peak in the Middle East. In imagination I can see Jesus, during those long years, walking in solitude, looking at those restorative scenes. He must have done so with regularity, for frequently the Scripture says, "He departed again into a mountain himself alone," or, "come ye yourselves apart into a solitary place and rest awhile." Out of these times came His wisdom, His understanding, His power.

Thomas Carlyle, in his study of *Heroes,* sees the indispensable place of the solitary way in the making of the prophets and those who gained insight into life. In the lives of so many great men we see that it was such solitary times that prepared them for the calamities of circumstance, the responsibilities of some portentous hour, and enabled them to see truth.

Since boyhood the story of Jesus stilling the storm has fascinated me. I used to wish for a magic that could make

a wind stop blowing or a pounding surf be still. I now see that there is a power just as potent in an inner attitude of calm and trust before any tumult on the outside. Jesus had it. In His many times of solitude He built within His aloneness convictions of faith. He achieved sound and unshakeable ideas about life and destiny. With this strength He radiated calm in a crowd.

Here now, in the little boat, tossed by angry waves, is but another instance of the power of a spirit that has come to terms with God and itself in aloneness. Fear is absent, for he had learned that there is nothing to fear. Fretfulness is absent, for anxiety has been superseded by an unshaking trust. There is indeed a great calm that makes itself felt before the howling passions of men or even in the midst of a storm of nature. We, too, can make similar achievements of the spirit.

It makes sense to see that balance is constantly maintained. The pendulum must swing between activity and rest, between work and a quiet evaluation of that work, between togetherness and solitude. When we study the lives of great men we feel this rhythm. Elijah went to the silences of Carmel and there sought and found inspiration for his victory over the false prophets of Baal. Moses spent many months in the lonely reaches of Sinai, a preparation for the busy years of organization and direction of the Hebrews. The one complements and makes possible the other. The mind is allowed to seek and find, without distraction, its conclusions—then when the tide of time asks for expression we must speak and act.

We all need this flow or swing. A young man with a disfiguring handicap lives increasingly within himself. He withdraws too much. Someone deeply concerned about him will say, "You can't grow by just looking within yourself."

That is true. Contact with friends and helpful associates is needed too. Activity, response to interesting work, and the sense of accomplishment *do* help to build mental and spiritual health.

There is a great danger in our modern world of having too much activity, too much society, and not enough quiet and aloneness. There is too much concern with the outer world and not enough with the inner one. We ought to be honest with ourselves and ask if the tendency to "join," to never say "no," merely keeps us from asking and answering any really important questions of ourselves. We may be kidding ourselves by saying, "I'm living," when in reality our endless activity hides what life is or ought to be for us.

I used to be greatly impressed with the back-slapping fellow who was always available. You know him: the life of every party. I am impressed no longer. A wise and cultured woman some years ago said to me, "To accomplish anything a person has to withdraw. 'No' must be said to many people. 'Yes,' to only a few." She told of a man, now long dead, who started a promising career in public service. He had strong and sound convictions at the beginning. But endless contact with people, with consequent adjustments and compromises, left him completely directionless. In trying to be something to everybody, he ended being nothing to anybody, including himself. We must learn to be true to ourselves.

One of the treasures which aloneness can provide is that of appreciation. We can't be our most thoughtful selves when always pressed through the wringer of activity. Sensitiveness to others and gratitude for life's wonder do not come when you are jostling with people on the subway or roaring on a superhighway, often going nowhere in a hurry.

Julian Bryan, whom I mentioned earlier, deeply appre-

ciates the cultures of other peoples and nations, and has performed a great service in interpreting these differing ways to Americans. But he has observed the American scene with equal perception, and he recently wrote me:

"Most Americans, I think, don't know how to be alone today. We are probably the most 'crowd conscious' people in the world. We are constantly dependent upon others. We don't dare to be alone. We really don't want to be alone.

"Strangely then, in my own busy life, I want to be alone for a while each day—away even from the people I love, away from everyone. The time for reading alone, for solitude, for reflection, for relaxing and just doing nothing, I find very important to me.

"I find many of my suburban neighbors work on their place from dawn till night on week ends and never stop to rest and contemplate in the lovely gardens they are so busy creating. The more important the man in the ministry, in government service, in medicine, the less today in America he seems to have time to be alone. He is caught in a great squirrel cage.

"My trips throughout the world have given me long hours in which to dream, to think, to be alone, to get away from humdrum routine and time to see how unimportant is most of what we do. Then I return home, fresh and invigorated."

Knowing Mr. Bryan as I do, I feel the deep sensitiveness in him, an appreciation for the other fellow's needs and weaknesses and hopes, developed by a man who was more than "just busy."

The Negroes who came to our shores as slaves achieved in their aloneness an awareness to beauty and goodness. One of our distinct musical contributions to the world is in the Negro spirituals. The haunting harmonies and the clear expression of the heart of Christianity that is in them came

from a people who were pushed into isolation. And so it was with the ancient Hebrews, who in captivity produced some of the loveliest Psalms. The sense of loneliness, well used, opened the soul to appreciations never perceived by the conquerors in whose midst they dwelt.

One of the best purposes of aloneness is the quiet contemplation of our blessings. It is a health-giving experience to see the wonder of nature and to be appreciative of the majesty and order of the cosmos. Not many people go off the deep end who have felt their kinship with the beauty of creation and have been grateful that they are a part of it.

A friend of mine, with planned regularity, goes off on solitary fishing or hunting trips. It's in such vivid contrast to his tense life of directing the work of many people in a highly competitive business that while chatting with him I once asked: "Why do you do it? Doesn't your business suffer? What do you gain?"

"I have to do it. My contribution to my work would peter out if I didn't have the change and perspective that getting away gives me."

"But is that what you do get out of it? Isn't it just plain fun for you? I think you're just smart enough to know that all work makes Jack a dull boy."

"It's that—but something more too. It's hard for me to put into words. But I'd say it's a kind of washing out inside."

I thought a moment and then spoke. "You remember the 23rd Psalm. Do the words: 'He leadeth me beside the still waters . . . He restoreth my soul,' express what happens to you in the woods?"

His smile told me I'd been right. He said, "Of course I know the Psalm. I can't say that I was ever really aware of a supernatural agency. What happens to me is a clearing of

the clutter inside. Yes, there is a restoring. Who or what does it I can't say. But I think this is an honest and true statement: I feel purged. When I leave my work after several months of pounding and battering, I feel like the devil. After several days alone in the wilderness I feel more like God inside."

That could be an invaluable experience for you and for me. A change of scene has something to do with it, but the important thing is to recognize that there is a need to be alone, to be restored. With that recognition, in an easy chair in your living room, in your own back yard, or on the park bench, you, too, can have that experience. And as the leaves respond to the caresses of the evening breeze, you will respond to the order, calm, beauty of the world. You will say, "This ought to be inside me instead of the confusion, bitterness, and heaviness that is there." Whatever you do, keep away from uselessly worrying the squirrel-cage problems of the day.

For you will find that needed experience of inner restoration—a clearing and straightening out—that can fit you much better for the tasks of the morrow. In quietness, to adopt a wonderful phrase from the Bible, you will find confidence, you will regain your inner strength.

It is in aloneness that you can gain one of the greatest of all treasures: fresh and creative ideas. Discoveries in science don't come from committees and conventions, they come from solitary thought and research. You may find a certain stimulation in the town meeting, but I'm inclined at times to go along with the pessimist who described open discussion groups as "a barnyard for the bray of ignorances and the cackles of self-pride."

I want to tell you of two men who have, I think, a growing stature in modern music and art. One is Debussy. The other, Cézanne.

Debussy developed his own special creativity in a disciplined aloneness. He never visited Spain, but his friend and interpreter, George Copeland affirms, "His *Ibéria* is more Spanish than any Spanish music that has ever been written by her countrymen."

Debussy would be silent for hours, for days; at times seeming almost fanatical in his avoidance of people. He refused to cloud his own awareness with the patter of the fool or the noise of the commonplace. He kept himself free from the interference of the world. Because of this, Copeland could add, "he indubitably heard sounds that other people have never heard."

The life of Cézanne, with his enforced isolation, seems so hard and at times pathetically barren. Until he was fifty his paintings, on which he labored for months, were given in exchange for groceries. An art supplier accepted some in trade for tubes of paint. Today every first-rate museum of the world prizes the work of the grand old man of modern art.

One of the reasons for this lies in the growing realization that Cézanne saw things in nature that had not been seen or portrayed before. Years of silent development of his technique, rumination on the ways he might express on canvas his own sensations in the presence of nature, were rewarded by sights and unique understandings that are increasingly honored.

You and I have similar experiences, or we would not understand the experience of Debussy or Cézanne.

As I type these words I remember an occasion, when I had spent many hours at a typewriter working on a manuscript.

That night, in half-wakefulness, there came an idea for an automatic gadget to show the remaining space on a page that was hidden by the platen. Why am I not on my yacht, purchased with the royalties from my bright idea? First, the idea most likely wasn't practical. But secondly, I will never know, because I didn't take the time to stay with the quick flash that came in aloneness. Next day, when I tried to put it on paper, it was gone.

Debussy did take the time. So did Cézanne.

It is in our aloneness that our character is formed. If we have direction in life, we get it here. It isn't just from other people that we achieve the integration which psychologists tell us is essential to personal well-being. We must build it within ourselves and we have to build it alone.

A friend of mine, who is a fine psychiatrist and has helped so many people, once told me of the technique he used and his personal preparation for its use. "My whole method is based on thinking *with* the person—*not about* him. It is suggestive therapy. The individual himself must come to an understanding of himself and his problems.

"I have a bust of Socrates in my office, reminding me of his dictum, 'Know thyself.' And before the day begins, here in the office, I have a silent time, that helps relate all the work, and me, and those who will come, to a Higher Power even than Socrates."

In some such way we can gain strength and direction for the day. A few moments of deliberate silence, with a quiet dedication of our best selves to the tasks that lie ahead, will give immediate poise and purpose. But more important than that, it will give strength to the framework of our character and, the courage to withstand whatever storms may come.

Those of us who saw Gertrude Lawrence on the stage felt the skill of a competent actress and the strength of a fine person. The tribute written by her husband included some insights as to how she dealt with her aloneness. Two factors played a large part in the building of the character we admired before the footlights.

One clue comes from the card on her dressing table which she frequently read: "Anyone can carry his burden, however heavy, till nightfall. Anyone can do his work, however hard, for one day. Short horizons make life easier and give us one of the blessed secrets of brave, true, holy living."

A second insight comes from a discussion of religion:

" 'But what is religion, Richard?' she asked.

"I referred her to the definition Professor Whitehead gave us at Harvard: 'A man's religion is what he does with his own solitariness.' "

Then her husband makes this observation: "Gertrude, more than anyone I ever knew, dedicated her solitariness to love. All her work for, and her generous gifts to, others were illumined by love. She wanted to help people, severally and en masse, because she loved people."

Later on I will speak at greater length of this spirit of love. But say it to your heart right now, and know it to be true: "If I will take even a few minutes to say in my inner silences, *'I can and will meet today with triumph, and I dedicate myself to the principle of good will, the spirit of love,—I will not go astray from the path of satisfying conduct to myself and all I meet.'* "

Not many of us can have the experience of the monastic who withdraws completely from the world. The thoughts of the solitary explorer may not be ours to know firsthand. But there is much we can learn from the writings of such

individuals. I was helped by the diary of Admiral Richard E. Byrd, written during his months of isolation in the Antarctic, during the long Polar night. He says that during that time he achieved an inner equilibrium that was to last him all his life. It was as though he built an inner awareness of character that forever after would tell him what was true and what was off-kilter in life. "In that instant I could feel no doubt of man's oneness with the universe. It was a feeling that transcended reason; that went to the heart of man's despair and found it groundless. The universe was a cosmos, not a chaos. . . .

"There were moments when I felt more *alive* than at any other time in my life. Freed from materialistic distractions, my senses sharpened in new directions, and the random or commonplace affairs of the sky and the earth, which ordinarily I would have ignored if I had noticed them at all, became exciting and portentous.

"A man's moments of serenity are few, but a few will sustain him in a lifetime. I found my measure of inward peace then; the stately echoes lasted a long time."

We may not have the physical opportunity to live in isolation as did Admiral Byrd. But we, too, can profitably use the solitude and aloneness we do have. We may not have unbroken hours to let some flash of perception or an old idea that is seen in a new light be fully explored. But we can take pencil and notebook and jot down our thoughts and examine them more fully another time.

It can't be underscored too much that *the inner raw material of our selfhood is our most precious possession.* Fail to make use of it and you are adrift. But form some convictions in your aloneness, see in silence what is most valuable, gain a perspective that you can get only from your own heart—and any chance wind will not drive you off course.

With his characteristic kindness and thoughtfulness, Mr. Bernard M. Baruch has written me that, "Every mistake I have made, and there have been many, has been due to not getting at the facts and eliminating frustrations, envy and ignoble thoughts."

How can you and I eliminate these destroyers of character, fuzzy thinking or no thinking at all, frustration, envy, and ignoble thoughts? The only way I know is in wrestling with them in our aloneness. Our problems? We alone can solve them, in the steady, honest evaluation of a mind that is uncluttered by what everybody else says, or what we think someone else says, or what we think someone else thinks we ought to do.

Most people, I believe, are potentially better than they think they are. I know that our Judeo-Christian tradition tells of the sinfulness of man. And many people rightly ask the question, "If through the long sweep of the Old Testament history, the people were only bad, why did God keep tolerating them as He did?"

The answer is, "God was seeking to redeem man from his evil ways."

"Then there must have been something to redeem, but what was it?"

"It was the clouded image of God himself, for in the beginning God breathed into man His own divine spirit."

So the traditional question and answers might run. God seeks to redeem mankind not by hating the evil but by loving the good that is within man. Jesus revealed this spirit when He lifted womanhood and childhood to a new level of dignity. He saw there not weakness and insignificance, but goodness and Divine potential. He did not condemn an adulteress, but enabled her to see the better self her sinning

had denied. And to that better self, she, in contrition, returned.

He enabled Peter to discover rocklike qualities of dependability within his soul, and on these foundations He entrusted His Church.

The Bible, although it thunders at our faults and evils, speaks of a continuous confidence in our hidden goodness. Perhaps that thundering makes us shy away from solitude. And the voice of conscience, reminding us of sins committed and worthy things omitted can make us uncomfortable and depressed.

You may say, "It's better not to think about them. I'll try not to put myself in a situation where I'm reminded of them." If you do, your reasoning is wrong. You deny yourself the chance to get your problems straightened out, to have the burden lifted by contrition. But the saddest thing of all lies in the fact that you don't give yourself the occasion to know that you are not just bad. There is more good in you than evil. There is a deep longing to be your true, fine self.

Carl Sandburg tells of his explorations in this area. "A man must get away now and then to experience loneliness. Only those who learn how to live with loneliness can come to know themselves and life. I go out there and walk and look at the trees and sky. I listen to the sounds of loneliness. I sit on a rock or a stump and say to myself, 'Who are you, Sandburg? Where have you been, and where are you going?' "

A man who does that is gathering materials for building good character. Then there comes along an intriguing by-product—he becomes a more interesting person to know. He has something to give.

Have you ever thought about the person who is really the most attractive to you? It isn't the individual who tells you

at great length about a play he's seen or a book he's read. You may listen politely, but inwardly you are saying, "If I were interested I'd read the book myself or see the play." Those who tell you of secondhand experiences are not the most interesting. And as for those who only mouth generalities and clichés which you know before they are spoken—why bother listening? But let someone express a genuine thought or idea. Sit next to an individual who speaks of what has been deeply significant to him, or who honestly gives you his inward reactions to an experience. You are all attention. This is real. This is important. You may not agree with the idea expressed, perhaps your reactions would have been different to the situation, but you respond quickly—you have been with a genuine human being.

In you, as in that individual you found so appealing, is the great reality, the soul. As you come to understand your own, you can't fail to come close to other people.

It takes some doing to do it. Plan and effort are necessary.

I was privileged to be present at a dinner given in honor of Robert Frost on the occasion of his eightieth birthday. When he was called on to blow out eighty candles and to speak, I was struck with the pink glow of his cheeks, put there by country air and solitary walks. He read some of his poetry. As I recall there was no particular order to his remarks. But I remember kindliness and good humor in his eyes, a face that was in repose, as though it had long looked on the foibles of life with patient indulgence. He expressed one thought which I hope I shall never forget. It was a call to use "craft and courage" to keep the world from closing in on us.

It does take craft and courage to know ourselves, to be ourselves. All around us are the appeals of "canned" and secondhand experiences. Gone seem the days of the frontier

solitude, the firsthand participation in political and civic affairs. The story is old and too-familiar which tells how our gadgets and machines for living make us increasingly busy and push the world into our living rooms. In the din we can lose ourselves—and the loss will be that of our greatest asset.

Craft and courage are needed to keep people away. Goethe advised that "It is absolutely necessary to break people of the habit of dropping in on you unannounced. They insist on your concerning yourself with their affairs, and their visits fill your mind with ideas foreign to your own. I myself do not need such ideas; I have more than I can do to carry my own to their proper conclusions."

But we allow this continual breaking in as we turn on the news reports, watch television, read the financial pages, and occupy the rest of the hours in being a spectator and continuous participator in the pushing, worrying, figuring, consulting, and dashing that makes up this world. Where is the *you* that has capacity for dreaming dreams, responding to beauty, thinking good thoughts, and just being glad? Most likely crushed somewhere beneath the avalanche of the world. Craft and courage are needed indeed!

The colorful and glamorous career of Irene Castle has now moved into quieter waters where the address is "Destiny Farm," Eureka Springs, Arkansas. With appealing directness she tells that she has just passed her sixty-second birthday, is poorer (economically) than she has ever been, but that she possesses a deeper happiness than she has ever known in her life.

As was the case with thousands of college men of a generation ago, Irene Castle was a pin-up girl in my fraternity house. Today there is a deep inner beauty that is added to outer charm which was hers in the past.

She writes to me, "Everyone thinks hermits are crazy. I think they are the smartest people in the world. There is no such thing as loneliness for people with active minds. Nature, too, for me, provides a world of interest, entertainment, and industry."

Then she goes on to tell of her daily life, much of it of necessity spent in solitude, while her husband is away. There are pets to be fed and watched, with a deepening appreciation of "these little people who inhabit the globe with us." She reports of a cross-stitch rug to be worked at night, friends to correspond with, and days in the outdoors, in the orchard or overseeing work on the farm. Night falls long before she is ready for it. While she is alone there is no time for grieving, pining, or feeling lonely. "I find solitude delicious," is her affirmation.

I was touched by what she said of her children who are now grown. "They do not neglect me, though they do not fawn on me and we demand nothing of each other; *we are independent people, all of us.*"

What a wonderful tribute to oneself and those about one! Can you think of a more desirable tribute than to have someone say, "I admire you your independence. You are self-reliant and self-sufficient. I think you can stand up to any demand of life"?

That tribute can be paid only to those who "with craft and courage" keep the world from crushing in—who take and make time in their aloneness to know the shining world within the soul.

It is here you will find your deepest satisfactions. Here you will develop your greatest asset and thereby come to the most intriguing of all life's adventures.

Chapter 3

Loneliness Can Be a Liability

One of the main ideas of this book is that you are never alone. You may think you are, but there are many forces, within and without, to comfort and help you in your aloneness. Another tenet is that your solitariness is a precious asset. Here you find the materials to build of yourself the kind of person you would like to be.

It's important to see that what we call "loneliness" is the chief enemy to our constructive use of aloneness. Let's define it as the *acute, chronic, nondirected sense of aloneness that breaks down man's integration.*

Loneliness is negative. It is the blackest of nights that shuts out the light rays of memory and hope, and denies you the sight of one's own best self, of reason and truth and wisdom, of God and the tides of mankind's feeling with you. William E. Park in his *The Quest for Inner Peace* has defined it: "Loneliness is when you are forced to be alone against your will: solitude is when, like Thoreau, you are willingly alone." It may be helpful to add that often loneliness is the

chronic state of sadness, dejection, or depression at being alone. It is a cheerless solitariness. Solitude can be just the opposite. It can be a time for creating joy, confidence, and exhilaration. In loneliness the source of these satisfactions is strangled.

Its causes are varied, but for every one that induces this state of mind, I believe there are countering factors that can restore one to an attitude of constructive aloneness.

My dear friend, Leslie D. Weatherhead, of London, wrote me, "I was discussing loneliness only the other day with a friend and we decided that there is really no cure except human friendship. It is very easy to talk and write about the friendship of God, but it must be mediated through living persons to be anything but a beautiful idea. But I must say I feel very concerned about the number of people who have hours of misery through loneliness, so if you have any cure, let me know."

I deeply share the concern of Dr. Weatherhead, who has been so devoted to helping men and women of our generation meet the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual stresses of our times. I don't have a capsule cure. But I know there are antidotes and palliatives for men and women who are destroying themselves in loneliness. It takes time to find the right medicine for each case. The prescription for one person may be wrong for another. Some palliatives may prove to be totally destructive; *but there are some that do work.*

I shall never forget a woman in her middle years whom I chanced to sight in a New York hotel room across the street from the window where I stood. Her room was truly a "hole in the wall." A tiny chest, one chair, and a sagging couch crowded the dismal eight-by-ten feet of space which must have been her home. She emptied a bottle that was on the chest, stumbled to the couch, and sat there, head in hands,

swaying back and forth with the tragic mien of a chief mourner at a funeral.

The streets below were crowded. The cubicles to her right and left, above and below, housed other people who came and went with the busyness of ants. Yet that woman was desperately, frighteningly alone. The empty bottle told of a release she wanted but could not achieve. The sagging shoulders, the aimless rocking, the unkempt hair clutched in weary hands, cried of a loneliness that was wrecking her body and might kill her soul.

Does anyone have the cure for that pathetic figure? I think there is one. I could not offer some easy formula such as: "Go out and mingle with the crowd. Take up some hobby. Forget yourself in some useful service." That may have been a need for her. I cannot be sure. But this I do know. She was a human being. Somewhere within her there were good memories and hopes which her dismal attitude was not letting in. There was a better self within from which she was alienated. There were ideas, thoughts, convictions, the sense of eternal purpose, the presence of One who faced an aloneness deeper than she could ever know—all of which she was shutting out. I believe with all my heart that for her and for everyone who passes through this dark valley of loneliness, there is some way out of the darkness, some way that leads to the light, where one was meant to be.

You are bound to have the feeling of lonesomeness at one time or another. Marjorie Roulston expressed herself so well to me on this point: "Expecting to go through life with no loneliness whatever is like expecting to escape all illness and disappointments. A little loneliness doesn't hurt anyone and sometimes it is definitely helpful in the end." As Marjorie Hillis, she wrote a widely read book, *Live Alone and Like It,* and she knows whereof she speaks.

Then, for her there came a happy marriage. But the sustaining ties brought by that union were broken by the unexpected death of her husband. This loss and shock made, she affirms, the first occasion in her life when she had to combat real loneliness. She faced her problem and feelings with openness and purpose. The results of her own experience and conquest are found in another helpful volume from her pen, *You Can Start All Over.*

I saw Marjorie Roulston recently at a meeting of church women. She is a leader in the group. Thoughtful of others, restrained, self-possessed, she represents a person who might have sunk deep in the bog of loneliness. But she did not let this happen. There was, I felt, an added beauty and depth to her fine character—graces won from lonesomeness.

The feeling of "being put upon," can create a momentary feeling of lonesomeness. Martha, in the Bible, was working in the kitchen to serve the Master, while her sister Mary sat at His feet and listened to His words. The petulance in her voice you perhaps have expressed yourself or certainly heard, "Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve *alone?* Bid her therefore that she help me."

If others in your group fail to give cooperation, or evade doing their part, you can feel resentfully lonesome as did Martha. Many an individual in a family has felt that way: "Everyone else seems to do what they want to do. I always get the short end of the stick."

And the making of a decision, the attempt to solve some problem, can bring the negative cloud of lonesomeness to cast a shadow over your life. A friend who devotes large amounts of time to consciously assisting people in need tells of the difficulty in distinguishing between "wants" and "needs." This is the way she phrases it: "If someone wants us to do something for them it is a call. We must then decide

whether it is a real need or just a desire. If it is a need we must answer the call. If it is just a want we must answer another real need first. The question arises: what is need? What do we, or does one, really need?"

This is not an easy decision to make. In passing, note that this constant concern for other people is one of the most healthy antitoxins to loneliness. But the immediate decisions can give momentary lonesomeness. You can be like the farm hand who was to sort potatoes into three sizes. His employer found him in a blue funk of frustration. "It isn't the work that's troublin' me. It's these confounded decisions that drives me crazy."

Recognizing that we all skirt the swamp of loneliness, let's look more carefully at some situations where one is deep in the quicksand and sees no way out.

Lonesomeness comes to all of us in the discovery of our own unique selfhood. Loneliness, with its inner gnawing at our spiritual vitals, is ours if we do not follow the inner voices, if we do not nurture our selfhood to its own distinctness and maturity.

This sense can be acute when you leave home the first time. Or sometimes a young person discovers that the planned or desired career, chosen by the family, is incompatible with one's own fulfillment. It then becomes necessary to break with the traditions of the social group in which one has been nurtured, to ignore the expectations of family and friends.

I see it in young people who fall in love but are members of different religious or racial backgrounds. I am reminded of a conversation with a man of Jewish background who came to me asking to be baptized in the Christian faith.

"As a member in the Orthodox tradition of Judaism you recognize that your act is the highest heresy?"

"Yes, I know."

"Are you aware, perhaps more keenly than I could ever be, that you are cutting yourself off from your immediate family?"

"I am very aware of that. I actually believe some members of the family would prefer I die than do what I am convinced I must do."

"It isn't my intention to probe or make this harder than it is. But I think, in light of the consequences, it's very important that you be completely honest and open-eyed. You have told me you are in love with a Christian girl. Has your emotional involvement with her had too much to do with your coming to me?"

"Truthfully, I can say no. If we are married, as I hope we some day may be, I'd like to have a united home. But she has never, in the long time I've known her, expressed any verbal desire that I do what I'm doing now."

"It's splendid to have a home where there is a united religious allegiance. But, from my observation, I believe it's more important that each member of the marriage be true to himself. To start a marriage where one member has compromised his own tradition because he thinks an outward union is helpful, doesn't always pay off. The hardships and misunderstandings you'll have to face, because of your differing backgrounds, may one day seem to be too high a price, unless you can say, 'The decision I made is one I truly believe in. I am responsible and I will stand by my deepest personal judgments and acts.' "

He responded, "I can say that. For years I have studied Christianity. I am personally convinced it fulfills the great tradition of Judaism. I have worshiped in many Christian churches over a long period of time. I know I have found a more congenial tradition for my needs and beliefs than in

Judaism. There is a hymn about which I want to be able to say, 'that's *my* hymn.' It's called 'Faith of our Fathers, Living Still.' "

I felt that this man had been honest with himself, and was aware of the consequences of his act. As he was baptized and received into the Christian tradition I felt too the centuries of men and women who had so stood up to be counted, "in spite of dungeon, fire and sword," and who, in the doing, came to terms with their deepest inner selves. There might be hardship ahead. But there could not be the blighting loneliness caused by an appeal to selfhood which had been rejected or denied.

This is in such vivid contrast to another man I know, who wanted very much to be a musician. His family might so easily have assisted him in that fulfillment. But they did not. The family business, in which all male members had served since great-grandfather's time, was the place for him. The pressures were constant, and he could not or did not resist. He might have been only a mediocre musician, but that is inconsequential. The point is that, first, he became a half-hearted businessman. But worse, he was a deeply lonely man, living with the unending agony of having failed to be himself.

I believe there is a way out even here. We must be ourselves. You have to be true to your best and surest inner lights. The pressures are never so heavy or the time so far-spent that an individual can't say both to society and to time, "God help me, this I must do. I can do no other."

I have met Paul Gallico only in his writings. But there I've become acquainted with a sensitive, broad-spirited person, through whose eyes it's good to look at life.

In a book of his, *The Lonely,* he tells of Jerry, an American flyer, who during the war falls in love with an English

girl named Patches. The conflict for the young man lies between his parents—who have visualized his marriage to the girl across the street and his settling into the pattern of life that is theirs, even to the nice brick house several blocks away—and the full love that is his for Patches, a love she tenderly returns.

Wandering aimlessly in an English fog, after a brief visit with his parents, Jerry is lost in a more torturous fog of loneliness. The realization comes that to deny the love of Patches would be to destroy himself and her. That would be something evil and a sin.

He finds Patches, confesses his love, and asks her to marry him. Of the thoughts that led him to his self-discovery and the courage to act upon this knowledge, Gallico writes, "You were a man only when you could be the things you were and face up to the truth without flinching or denying it. And the truth was that in life on earth there was no such thing as happiness without pain, victory without defeat. There were joy and enchantment and beauty to be garnered on the path, but at all times, too, there were burdens to be borne."

As Jerry and Patches walk together in the fog, both are free of any doubts. And Patches knew that "somewhere, somehow, Jerry had left his boyhood behind him and had grown into a man."

It is a step into maturity to hear and heed the truths from our aloneness. To disregard the calls from our true selfhood is to be held back in the web of loneliness.

Another cause of loneliness lies in guilt and remorse when we have sinned. It's well and good to see the truth that:

> All the water in the world,
> However hard it tried,

Could never, never sink a ship
Unless it got inside.

All the evil in the world,
The wickedness and sin,
Could never sink your soul's fair craft,
Unless you let it in.

But the evil of the world *does* get in! We are weak vessels. And however much we may want to keep the water out, it seeps inside by the unworthy things we do and the worthy things we do not do.

The cure? Is it not that of the Prodigal Son who had wasted his substance in riotous living? Do you remember—*"he came to himself."* That is significant. The evil, the aimless, the fruitless self was not his best self. He refused to coddle and weep over the foolish self that caused him regret.

Recognizing his fault and that there was a better self to be lived with, he added, "I will arise and go to my father. . . . I am no more worthy to be called thy son. Make me as one of thy servants." In that parable are the upward steps to mental and spiritual healing from the infection of loneliness. Honesty, positiveness, the will to act, the seeking of forgiveness, humility, were the steps that led to the restoration of the prodigal to the place he was meant to be. They are the same for you and for me.

We can be rid of our shame and remorse and fear by an overt act that positively expresses regret and seeks forgiveness. "I did you a great injustice. I ask you to do what is hard for you, forgive me. It will be harder for me to forgive myself." Such words and such a spirit may disperse the lonely feelings that overwhelm us.

But there are situations where this cannot be done. What then? There is God. One of the biblical assurances fre-

quently repeated in Christian Churches across the world reads, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Here is one of the most effective ways to mend our ways and correct our faults.

In Chapter 6 this experience will be considered more fully. Sin is the turning away from our best selves. It is not only breaking the law of God and the highest standards of the society in which you live. It is a departure from "the Divine" within our own hearts. It can lead to the bleakest and blackest form of loneliness for us as it did for Judas. Let us try to live by the gospel, the gospel that calls for confession, that assures man that Christ can give release from the loneliness of sin. Christ is adequate, "but you must repent, confess, commit and surrender yourself to Him first."

Tension, resentment, friction between ourselves and others can never give us peace of mind. Nicholas Berdyaev, in his thoughtful analysis, *Solitude and Society,* sees that "Dispute, conflict, and even hatred are all social manifestations which often serve to suppress or to allay the sense of solitude. Their ultimate effect, however, is to increase that sense."

This happens in war. There is still much misunderstanding between Northerners and Southerners going back a century to our Civil War. In your individual experience the sense can be keener still because there are no others who may share the hatred with you. It is a lonely burden.

In the Prodigal Son, referred to earlier, you see one form of loneliness. The elder brother, who stayed at home and dutifully worked in the fields, while the younger was off on his gay spree, felt another cause for loneliness. His was prompted by bitterness, hurt feelings, and hatred.

The elder brother probably came in from plowing to wash

his feet and hands at the kitchen door. Amazed, he heard laughter and music. Mouth-watering odors floated on the evening breeze. He got the story from one of the servants. That no-good younger brother of his had come home—probably only to make another touch on the old man. But his father was acting like a fool, killing the fattest calf and putting his very best robe on the scalawag.

Well, if this wasn't the height of something or other! It sure showed where he stood! All the time the younger brother was away he had done double-duty—no complaining either, mind you—hard, unending work, all done without a word of self-pity. There hadn't been any party for him. No one had said, "Let's kill the fatted calf for Solid Sam, who's kept the farm from falling apart at the seams." And now, no one even bothered to come out and tell him of his brother's return. They didn't even think of him. Maybe he wasn't even wanted.

The more he thought about it the angrier he got. Letting out some Aramaic cuss words and hitting an ox on the rear quarter with a stone, he went out behind the barn. There he sputtered and sulked. A bitter "lonesomeness" it was indeed. Left unresolved it would drag him into the sticky mud of "loneliness."

What can the resolution be here? It came for the older brother in the form of the father, who wisely showed him that he had an unshakable place, "All that I have is thine." As the father talked the older son saw that the joy over the return to life from death of the younger in no way usurped any appreciation of himself. In other words, the older brother got some sense in his head.

I recommend a book entitled *A Philosophy of Solitude* by John Cowper Powys. We may not agree with everything in the book, but there is a wholesome emphasis made through-

out on the value of a thoughtful, philosophic evaluation of ourselves and our experiences. "Never in history," he writes, "has it been more important for the individual to think deep and long, when the whole tendency of collective life is doing what it can to take the glamour of existence and kill it." Mr. Powys asks us to face the false pictures, the "poisons of the world," with *"the magic of the mind."* He affirms that life can be lived with poise and freedom if we will only be "obstinate, crafty and lonely" and permit the mind to relate itself to Truth.

It was the act of doing some thinking that saved the older brother from his loneliness. That is an important thing for us to remember: "Think It Out, Brother," when we feel we are about to lose our way.

The sense of being rejected or alienated can cause loneliness. You move to a new community. No one calls or makes any gesture of hospitality. You think of all the nice people who hated to see you leave your old home. Before you know it a wave of lonesomeness sweeps over your heart. If there is no pushing it back, it can cripple you with loneliness.

A woman I know so handicapped herself for several years in a community to which she had moved. She lived, sour and withdrawn, waiting for others to take the initiative in recognizing her, inviting her. As she put it, "Finally the light dawned. If I wanted other people to be interested in me, I had to be an interesting person myself. Not many campfires are started by spontaneous combustion or lightning. Somebody has to strike a match. I scratched a light when I invited a neighbor in for tea. I've been warm ever since."

And I am deeply touched by individuals who may have some physical handicap or condition of suffering that makes

them feel alienated. The little boy with thick glasses, who wistfully stands by as classmates tussle over a football; the young mother, struck with an invaliding disease, who from a wheelchair must watch her children grow up; the face of the older man, just retired by his company, sitting on a bench where he cannot be seen, but where he can see his friends dash to make the 8:04 train into town. These and so many others, who seem to be in a special area of loneliness, prompt my tender and questioning concern.

I cannot pretend to have answers for all these people. Theirs may be a loneliness that my most sympathetic imagination cannot touch. But this I do know: that never, never, never are all the doors shut. The most important door of all, that one within your own aloneness, can be closed only by you. If some physical limitation cuts you off from most of life, there may be presented an opportunity to open those precious doors more widely than ever before. Many people have walked through those broader arches and enriched the ages with scientific discoveries, poetry, songs, and wisdom. It can be so with you.

Some months ago I had an attack of bursitis. One night, unable to sleep, I jotted some notes on my feelings and impressions. I give them to you only because I believe they reveal the beginning of some sensitivenesses that only the sense of pain and alienation from others made possible.

"I know what it is to be alone with physical pain. I know as I write these words.

"It is a solitary matter. The time is 4:25 A.M. I listen for any comforting sound—something that can wing the consciousness away from the hell that bites and stabs and throbs from the shoulder down the arm past the elbow, to make each finger afraid to move lest the agony be increased or prolonged. But there is no assuaging sound. No distant train.

The oil burner resentfully growls into action. But it is like an inhospitable Frankenstein, with too much care of its own to be concerned with any human discomfort. Yes, there is an unfamiliar creak or strain somewhere in the house—a noise that is alien to the day. The laughter of the baby and the jarring slams of the schoolboy are stilled in crib and bed by the angel of sleep, whose absence from me deepens further my lonesomeness.

"The view from the windows does not help. Neighbor's houses are cloaked in stern silences. Gone are the smiles of lighted windows and doorways that greeted the earlier evening hours. Street lights, with their pools of illumination on empty pavement, seem kin to me. They too are solitary, unable to communicate, weary with pushing back the encircling darkness.

"It is hard to read. The jab of pain tears one away from a biography or the banter of a magazine. Like a man overboard in churning water, every plank eludes one's grasp and floats away. There is no searchlight coming nearer. No encouraging voice is heard across the waters. One is naked and alone, held by a cruel enemy.

"How good it would be to talk to someone. Yet how grateful I am that I don't have to talk.

"Once imagination could soar the wide world and find refuge somewhere. The mind could roam distant lands. The heart could be comrade with another long stilled. Not so now. All consciousness is slave to the tyrannical ache—the raw nerve that twists and jabs. How like a prisoner chained head and foot in a cell it makes one feel. . . ."

I felt and experienced and sensed something that night in a way I never had before: the budding awareness and sensitiveness that isolation alone makes possible.

Believe that the doors are never closed unless the black

hand of loneliness does the closing! Keep those doors open. See and walk toward the new horizons beyond.

There are individuals who worry themselves into loneliness. Dr. Bluemel in his *Psychiatry and Common Sense* calls worry "the habit of fearful thinking. There is a definite element of obsession in worry; for worry is persistent and recurrent and at the same time purposeless and futile."

One woman tabulated the worries that plunged her into aimless loneliness and came up with this analysis.

40% will never happen.
30% are about matters which can't be altered.
12% are prompted by other people's unjust criticisms and judgments.
10% are about personal health, which gets worse as one worries.
8% are legitimate. Life does have problems to meet.

But even in this last category "concern" should mark our response, rather than "worry." The latter goes in aimless circles. The former pauses and says, "Here is a matter that needs attention. Now how is the best way to deal with it?"

There are a thousand ways given to stop worrying. The best way I know lies along the line of our seeking in this volume. It is to cultivate your own individuality, your own aloneness, against the perspective of eternal wisdom and experience.

Worry comes from useless concern over the past, the future, people, external events and circumstances. But your real life isn't bound up with these things unless you let it be. It may be very hard to break that pattern of thinking, but it's worth giving it every try.

A woman confessed to me that one Saturday night she was

on the verge of suicide. Her husband had divorced her; her only child seemed unsympathetic to her emotional turmoil; and practical problems, which she was unaccustomed to shouldering, were crushing her. All of life seemed to have collapsed.

By chance her eye caught the title of a sermon on the religious page of a newspaper, "There IS a New Life for You." Those words sent her mind running in a new channel. Words and ideas long forgotten were given a chance to come back. "All things are possible. . . ." She began to see the mistake she had made in depending too much on other people. That woman has now gained an individuality, which for years had been stifled by fret and worry.

Peter Anson's study of hermits, solitaries, and monastics shows how, across the centuries, men and women have renounced the world to seek and worship God and to find themselves in aloneness. The word "renunciation" is one that you need to have in your vocabulary and action if you want freedom from the deteriorations of loneliness. You must say to some fear of the future, to the resentments and anxieties that other people may prompt in your own spirit: "You, I renounce. You have no further claim on me. See, I throw your chains off my heart once and for all."

For the great hermits the renunciation was of the world and all worldly things. They were then able to seek what for them was the *summum bonum,* the greatest good in the area of the spirit. You may not be able to say the words of renunciation to family responsibility, to the mortgage on the house, and seek the solitary ways of the Carmelite, the Carthusian, or the Benedictine. But you can renounce the fruitless anxieties and worries that create a loneliness in you which a true Franciscan and Dominican never knows.

This act of renouncing the causes of worry can bring to you what it has brought to centuries of solitaries, "not 'Woe,' but 'Winsome Virtue.' " You are free to find your true self.

There is a loneliness that can come and stay through a lack of knowledge, a failure to see the reason or purpose of one's existence.

The aged may look back on years of useful activity and see some purpose for living then—but how useless life seems now! But the loneliness can be just as poignant for the adolescent who is tortured by the question, "What's it all about? Why am I here? How should I use my life? Among all the possible answers, which one is right for me?"

And the man in middle age has achieved his goals but looks at what he has gained and asks, "So what?" He, too, faces a terrible loneliness. So too with the woman who has poured her energies into home and family and now, with youth and vigor beginning to wane, wonders if it was worth the effort.

All that is said in future chapters has direct bearing on this aspect of loneliness, as well as others. But I offer one answer here that I find increasingly helpful. It is the conviction that you are a fragment in the loving process of creativity. Everything in the physical world has relatedness and purpose. Nothing in nature is lost. That we can see. Our tiny bit is a particular shape and color, created for a special place in a vast and intricate mosaic of creation. No other piece will fit there—only you.

This line of thinking and feeling has been delicately portrayed by Paul Gallico in *Snowflake*. The tiny, beautiful crystal falling from the sky wonders, "Where did I come from? And where was I before? Whither am I going? And why?"

"It was strange, Snowflake thought, to see so many of her

brothers and sisters, newborn like herself, and yet to feel so alone.

"No sooner had she thought this when she became aware that all about her there was a kind of dear and tender love, the feeling as of someone caring, that filled her through and through with warmth and sweetness.

"And now Snowflake no longer felt lonely."

But she knew lonesomeness time and again in her existence. There was pain for her. She knew times when she felt she served some useful purpose. But always there was the wondering, even though she was sure she was a part of some order and purpose. She might not know what it was, but she did know there was One who loved all things, great and small. "And the last thing she could remember, before the sun drew her up into the heart of the cloud above, was that all about her the air and the sky seemed to ring with the tender and loving words, 'Well done, little Snowflake. Come home to me now.' "

Some may say this is wishful thinking or is a pious and sentimental delusion. One acquaintance of mine would call it presumptuous egocentricity.

I find it none of these. That we live in a creation of order, which is at the heart, benign or persuasive or loving, is the one conviction that makes increasing sense. The longer I look at man and his cosmic environment, the more I see that all things, including evil and cruelty, disease and seeming impersonality, fit into the framework of a purposeful and caring creation. This conviction is supported by reason and observation.

I hope it is so for you. If it is, treasure and nurture it. If it is not, I urge you to free yourself of possible prejudices against it. Think about it, live with it for a time. Hammer it against any anvil of realism you like. You may find yourself

making spiritual and mental steel with which to ward off the demons of loneliness.

Loneliness may be caused by failure to achieve some purposes or aims you thought you ought to achieve. It can be brought on too if you have won your race, but wonder if you've been riding the wrong horse.

In his study entitled *The Lonely Crowd,* David Riesman points out the intolerable loneliness of children, either in home or school, who fail to achieve the goals of appearance, scholarship, or accomplishment set by parents, teachers, or school friends.

The answer is along the road we have been traveling—recognizing the uniqueness of each personality, valuing not only the baseball hero but the man who writes poetry or who collects and studies rocks. We have made progress, which we see with Mr. Riesman, when we respect the "inner-directed" individual and refrain from telling the solitary child "that he should be part of a crowd and *must* have fun."

But the sense of an unachieved goal may still haunt a man's memory. Chronological age may not assuage the feeling of outsideness at failing to make the team or missing "that vice-presidency by forty." An insulated frustration may seethe within.

In May of 1955 Dr. Nathan E. Cohen, addressing the National Conference of Social Work, meeting in San Francisco, spoke of the increase of mental health problems in our country. He pointed out that our increased productivity often caused greater insecurities. Increased leisure time, he affirmed, proves to be, for many people "a threat rather than a blessing."

What makes our success or our failure a good thing or bad, our leisure a threat or a blessing? The real causes of loneli-

ness are not success or failure, not too much time or too little. The explanations lie within the individuals—no need to look elsewhere. It's because they are selfish, self-centered. They have never used their aloneness to gain depth of soul and breadth of understanding.

Mary Margaret McBride wrote, "Some of the most miserable (and the most misery-making) mortals I know are the empty ones who never seem to think of anything except themselves, who wallow in self-pity and fear." This is unfortunately all too true.

Loneliness is a result of chronic inner emptiness, brought on by egotism and false pride, which makes people reveal whining incompetence before outward circumstance. The brutal truth is that they have coddled themselves for so long that the only point of reference is their own squeezed, miserable, little souls. No wonder they are so lonely.

The Russian philosopher Berdyaev was speaking of these people when he wrote: "There is nothing so detestable or destructive as egocentricity, as an Ego absorbed in itself, and in its own states, oblivious of other Egos, of the world, of its plurality and 'totality'; in a word, an Ego that fails to transcend itself."

Don't say "I'm lonely because of my success or my failure." You may feel solitary, but that can be a blessing. Ask yourself honestly, "Have I been so self-centered and self-concerned that I've never known the blessing of being alone?" It is not too late to remake your inner life so that you will be prepared for any external event.

A physician friend of mine was counseling a woman with whom I had also talked. The conversation went something like this:

"Doctor, I'm forty-one. A widow. I'm desperately lonely. Since my husband's death five years ago, I've withdrawn more

and more. I worry day in and day out about myself. A specialist told me these splotches on my face are psychosomatic—due to anxiety. That's why I came to you. I understand you've been helpful to people like me. I'm so lost. I want to reestablish a home. But I don't know how to go about it. I'm so empty, so afraid."

"Tell me about your interests and activities."

"There isn't much to tell. I feel so self-conscious, being a lone woman. The couples and families my husband and I had as friends, well, I just don't see them any more."

"You belong to a church. What do you do in the church life?"

"Well, I go to the services with more or less regularity. I do enjoy it. Sometimes it's very comforting to me in my sorrow and loneliness. But that's about all."

The physician had been studying the woman. Her hair needed a shampoo. Her clothes were carelessly worn, suggesting an indifference to her appearance.

He said, "I agree with you. It would probably do you good to meet a nice man. It certainly is important to associate with other people and to put yourself in situations where you can be a part of interesting and useful activity. Now the first part of my prescription, which I'll give you today, involves the outward impression you make. You are an attractive person. You have a nice figure. But no one would know it. You are to go to a beauty salon, get a new hair-do and a facial treatment. The latter is not to make the spots disappear but to show the natural quality of your skin."

The woman's eyes showed amazement. "This is a strange order. I thought you'd prescribe pills or something."

"That may come later. But I'm not finished. Buy some new clothes, remembering what your best colors are and how and what you should wear to make the most pleasing appearance.

Next, and more important, I want you to join the church choir. You have a good voice, and I know of your past interest in singing. Next, I want you to do some reading. It can be anything under the sun that interests you—modern literature or ancient, science, or what have you. But make it reading where you learn something you didn't know before. One more thing, I want you to do volunteer work with underprivileged children. I could make suggestions to you. But I'd like *you* to find the group you think most needs help and where you can be most helpful. I want to see you again, but not until a month has passed."

It was more than two months before she called for another appointment. The physician told me he scarcely recognized her as the same woman who had been in his office weeks earlier. Her eyes were alive. She sat opposite him straight and trim.

"Now the first thing to check on," he commented, as he looked at the office record, "is that skin trouble."

"Oh, that. Those awful red blotches on my face disappeared within a month or so after I saw you. I joined the choir and also began to read in the field of oriental literature which had intrigued me back in college. I became so interested that I'm taking two courses at the university. Besides that, I want you to know that they've made me a member of the children's work committee at the Neighborhood House in Harlem. I've had so much to do the last weeks. I debated coming to see you at all. But I felt I must to just say thank you."

"I'm glad you came back. The really important part of my prescription I can see you've concocted yourself. Shall I tell you what it was?"

"Please do. I think I know even though I haven't tried to put it in words."

"It's a magic medicine that a person can only brew within herself. It doesn't come by getting a new hat or by joining a club. But it is created if she sings or works or learns with eagerness."

There happens to be an almost fairy-land end to this story. The physician served as best man at a quiet wedding when she married another doctor whose specialty was crippled children. I performed the ceremony. Considerable time has passed, but I still see the face of that woman, who found a cure for loneliness—not at the hair-dresser's or the dress-maker's—though each played its part. The cure took place from within. The externals helped her to get away from her whining little self. They enabled her to see her own abilities and resourcefulness, which selfishness and self-pity had stifled. As the inner self was given a chance to grow, it drew others to her in gratitude and love. She learned the great distinction between loneliness and re-creative aloneness.

We can be pulled close to the despair of loneliness if we try to be our true selves and feel repulsed by others. So felt the ancient prophet: "Lord, they have killed Thy prophets, and digged down Thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life." "It is the feeling of being isolated from everyone, even when one does one's best to be one's true self." We can feel that way when, in a sincere effort to be ourselves, we are completely honest and open with other people. If this serves only to alienate us from the world, we feel unappreciated and misunderstood.

There are two ways to cope with this situation. Both matters have to do with our inner solitude. First, we must reassure and strengthen ourselves in the thought that the only way to be true to the world and mankind is by being true to our own hearts. As Dr. Riesman says, "there are enormous

potentialities for diversity in nature's bounty and men's capacity to differentiate their experience." We must value that in others, and value and honor it in ourselves. We lose both social integrity and personal individuality by being coerced by what others think.

Secondly, we should learn to examine with detachment the expectations of others, in terms of the expectancies of our own souls. V. Sackville-West in his poem, "Solitude," speaks of "the strange confusing voice of men" which during the busy hours of the day:

> Confused me through the senses and the heart;
> Only with nightfall could I stand apart
> And view the shaping pattern of my way.

If we are strong enough to withstand the misunderstandings, the silly alienations from others; if we view, in aloneness, the shaping pattern of our way, we will not be desperately lonely either in a crowd or in our own solitude.

There are, of course, other types and causes of loneliness. An irrational and persistent loneliness may have deeply buried psychological and even physiological causes. In that case, psychotherapy and complete clinical studies are strongly advised.

Recent psychological investigations have shown that severe emotional shocks, hidden or unrecognized grief or fear, experienced much earlier in life, may come into our awareness in the form of loneliness. It may have been the loss of a parent, a favorite toy, a friend—a support, which at one point in life seemed so essential. Years have passed, but the remembrance is submerged within. A skilled analyst may be able to find the causes, and a cure as well.

Spiritual emptiness can lead to loneliness. Mental immaturity can lead there too. There is always a cause for loneli-

ness in the individual who seeks to avoid the unavoidable, namely himself.

For all the problems I have mentioned and the various other possibilities that I am not able to include here, I believe there is a cure. But each man has to seek his own.

Jesus said that the unforgivable sin is in denying the Holy Spirit, which speaks to us in our aloneness. It is the voice of love, of hope, of faith, of reason and truth. It is the voice of God and humanity's heart that echoes across the world and guides our stumbling feet as we seek our way back to Him.

In the end it is in the listening to this spirit within our soul and heeding its call that keeps us from the dark road marked loneliness.

Chapter 4

Yesterday's Memories and Tomorrow's Hopes

Solitude need not be black and bitter with loneliness; it can be your most profitable and radiant experience. There are other "yous" to help make it so.

You can make such times fruitful by recapturing your own good memories and bowing again at the altars of your hopes. To use constructively the past experiences and the future expectations is to follow the path to health and to life.

The you of yesterday, the you of tomorrow, and the you of today have to come into some kind of amicable relationship. If you try to escape or thwart your past or your future, they come to you in dreams at night, in the unexplained waves of depression that cloud the sunniest day. You may say your hopes are dead. Why, then, does your pulse beat faster at an act of heroism? Why do you weep at a wedding? Or why do you want to call out a warning when you see a young person turn down a wrong path?

The self you have been and the self you might have become, or still may be, will not leave you alone. Stephen Girard says, "The love of labor is my sheet-anchor. I work that I may forget, and forgetting, I am happy." But you and I know that he's fooling himself if he thinks he can completely shut himself off from his past. It isn't so. He may forget himself temporarily in his work, like the drunkard does in his bottle. But he can't raise an iron curtain either against the experience of yesterday or the hopes for tomorrow.

How wise it would be to come to terms with these people of our past and of tomorrow! We begin when we accept our past and our future as inescapable forces in our present. "Stop trying to run away from yourself," are words that should be said to some people. In his very helpful contribution to this study Bernard M. Baruch wrote me, "There has been given to every man what we term a conscience. . . . With his conscience he must wrestle if he does not do what his conscience directs him to do. If one is alone, he has time to think. There is too little time given to that by individuals and by those in control of our governments."

Accept the inescapable fact that you are a person possessing not only present responsibilities but having past experiences and future hopes. You have an inner evaluator labeled *conscience* who acts as a constant check on you, not only on your present but on your past and future too.

Accept too the fact that your yesterday and your tomorrow can enrich and stabilize and give direction to your today. The "bad" memories need understanding, cleansing, forgiving, if they infest today and thwart hope. But the good memories, too, need recalling and appreciating. Remember Wordsworth's "The Daffodils."

I wandered lonely as a cloud
  That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
  A host, of golden daffodils,
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

. . . . . .

. . . oft, when on my couch I lie
  In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
  Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

His experience can and should be ours too. Fine memories, when life was seen at its highest, are stored within you. In your aloneness remember them. Savor them once again. And don't let the fine hopes and aspirations of your heart get buried under the refuse of present pressures.

Like a tree cut at its base, something of us is allowed to die if we keep no association with our roots. What restoration there is to go to a family reunion and have a great-aunt recall how you got a splinter in your bottom sliding down the cellar door! What laughter is more merry and healing than that of men who recall their happy adventures as boys? A friend of mine tells me of his need to get together with a trio he knew in high school with whom he went off on a summer's vacation fishing. There were riotous escapades on woodland roads, water fights where only a beaver might be spectator, contests and bantering arguments about who was the best fisherman and whose turn it was to do the dishes. "I need to get contact with that me that could roar with laughter and raise a bit of the old Ned."

But he doesn't have to seek out his old cronies, all, now probably, as stodgy as himself. The boy who could splash in an icy lake and scream like an Indian when he landed a five-pound bass is within him still. Use aloneness to let the person you were yesterday live with you today.

Often this reacquaintance with our past can lead to clearer understandings about ourselves today.

We certainly can learn that the squalling infant that once we were, the frightened kindergartener, the rebellious adolescent, hasn't disappeared simply because we are thirty or sixty or ninety. Sigmund Freud said we leave troops to guard the passing gates of childhood and adolescence. Then if the you that lives in the now, finds the going hard, or life too frustrating, you may seek to go back to the earlier era and attempt to stay there. But he is running away who seeks to shut himself off from a disturbing present or a more fearful tomorrow.

The healthy association with our past can prevent this escapism. More than that, if we pursue the past honestly, we may find that we are letting too much childhood or adolescence be expressed in our present years of maturity. Childish expectations may be carried over into the present, making us still wish for Santa Claus every morning of the week, rather than seeing that life calls us to know Santa Claus joy as we live with generous good will.

We may learn that we are not fulfilling the claim of life to let each era of our living be one when we build, "more stately mansions of the soul."

The story of Ruth is one of the loveliest tales in the Old Testament. Her husband died. Yet, while past memories were and always would be a sweet blessing in her life, she refused to use them as an escape from a present with practical problems. To her mother-in-law she said, "Whither thou goest, I

will go—thy people shall be my people." She went to a different land, there to face a new life. Her confidence that life claimed her to the end, which made her appreciative of the past, trustful of the future, and therefore adequate in the present, led to fresh and perhaps even more satisfying chapters in her life.

Mr. Harry A. Overstreet says that overcoming of loneliness "has to do with the whole building up of a sound and resourceful character." So it is indeed. As I see it, one phase in the building of this character comes as we keep an understanding friendship with our past. We must also keep an allegiance with the hope that lies within our heart.

We are and will be the result of our experiences and our aspirations. The nuances of this truth are often best caught by the poet. Willis Eberman, in a poem entitled "Communion," wrote:

> There is no mountain in the sky
> That stands alone;
> But builds to its exalted height
> Stone by white stone.

So the summit of what you are today is the sum total of your experience, work, insight, tears, triumphs, defeats, and hopes. V. Sackville-West describes how he treasures and seeks to regain the presence of himself which only memory at work in aloneness can restore. He affirms:

> Shreds of myself returned again to me;
> Shreds of myself, that others took and wove
> Into themselves, till I had ceased to be.
> Poor patchwork of myself was all unripped
> And stitched again into some harmony
> Like the pure purpose of an orchestra. . . .
> Such lovely hours are written on my soul.

We talk about "getting ourselves into shape" for life. In our aloneness we can find ourselves, after being pushed and molded "out of shape" by the demands and pressures of the world. The self of our yesteryear and the self of our tomorrow can give us health once again.

One of the great ministries of your past is to give you truths and counsels with which to solve the problems of the moment. William James once wrote, "I have been growing lately to feel that the great mistake of my past life . . . is an impatience of results. Inexperience of life is the cause of it. . . . Results should not be too voluntarily aimed at or too busily thought of." Such an evaluation comes from looking back over one's past. Patience and persistence are great gifts to be wrested from life. They are won by the man who uses his aloneness to see and evaluate his self of former years.

Mr. J. C. Penney told me how the strong influence of his parents helped him at trying times. He recalled how his father, a clergyman, was excluded from his church because he affirmed his conviction that the clergy should be educated and that a Sunday school for children was essential. Young Penney was bitter and rebellious at the unjust action. But the dignity of his father and mother in meeting that disastrous hour stands out in his memory. The parents expressed in action the biblical words they cited to the boy, "Forgive them for they know not what they do." The high ethical and moral sense given by them and the challenge to live by the Golden Rule were purposely taught and presented to the growing boy so that they would go deep. They did. And it was at the time of hardship, the times of decision, that this fine heritage of the past spoke its vital word to his present.

You too have such strong inspiration and fine teaching in your past. Are you keeping in touch with it? Forgetting it,

denying it, can confuse and unsettle you in the present and set you adrift from yourself.

Then there is always a poise that comes to the individual who keeps a healthy friendship with the happiness and goodness of his past. You feel it in a family like the Whiteoaks of Jalna. There is tradition in the house and grounds and family that surrounds each individual of the group who lived at Jalna. Grandmother is always a part of the picture to keep alive the individual and family histories. Each individual of the clan has a self-possession and wholesome self-esteem.

There are not many Jalnas in our modern life, where three or four generations have lived in the same house, where portraits on the wall and mementos on the shelf or in the attic give a sense of relationship with one's roots. But we all have such a Jalna in memory. Aloneness permits you to wander in the halls and hear the voices and see the loved faces that nurtured your best self.

A person who does that can meet his present with a smile in his heart and head held high. You feel this in Richard Llewellyn's character of *How Green Was My Valley,* who looked over the scene of his childhood. The physical green of the valley was no more. But in memory he relived the loved times in his own springtime. He heard the singing that rang in the valleys. Tempting odors from his mother's kitchen when the day's work was ended in the pit he savored once again. However bleak the present may be, that man can walk with dignity and poise. He had exposed himself to the supports of good memories.

Then again a good acquaintanceship with the person of our past helps us to see sorrow and tragedy in right perspective.

How abysmal some defeats and sorrows were at given moments in our life! But we lived through them. We were able to go on. We can surely do so now in the trouble we must face today. In the long sweep of our total life the desperately deep crevasse, where we may have groped our way for a time, is seen to be only a slight, and perhaps now, a lovely valley. The boy or girl and the man and the woman of our yesteryear can give us this perspective, if we'll let them.

There is an evaluation of aloneness in Anne Lindbergh's book, *Gift from the Sea,* which concludes that "one cannot go back to that tightly closed world," of some choice time in one's yesteryear and then hide away from a disagreeable present. "One has grown too big, too many-sided. . . ." How true this is! We see from the reacquaintance with our past that we have grown. If, somehow, either from within, or from the mystic balances which life offers to any time of hardship, we were able to get over the hurdle years ago, we can surely do it now!

Musing on the Crucifixion of Christ, Thomas à Kempis wrote "Thou canst not escape the Cross, whithersoever thou runnest, for go where thou wilt, thou carriest thyself with thee and shalt ever find thyself. Turn thyself outwards, turn thyself inwards, turn thyself upwards, turn thyself downwards, everywhere thou shalt find it." The Cross symbolizes, among many things, the hardship and tragedy that is in life. We cannot escape that. But it symbolized too the truth that the most wrenching tragedy can be overcome. It need not spell only defeat. It can be victory.

The individual who from time to time is alone with his past and with his future will know this. That knowledge will give preparation and courage for whatever the future may bring. There will also be resources for mastering the here and now.

Then the aloneness, in which you are never alone, because the past and the future are there too, can bring an ecstasy and an intuitive oneness with eternity. It is an experience that words cannot altogether circumscribe. Many have tried. One who did is John Cowper Powys. He says that those who have the experience are barred, by the nature of it, from being able to tell the means by which they achieved their moment of transport. Yet he goes on to write: "But in this large, calm, luminous mood, with a feeling of the earth, as the mother of us all, carrying us through lonely space, certain delicate and volatile essences float towards us from far-off days in our own life. Not logical in their arrival, not logical in their departure, these voyaging fragments of human experience seem to make everything luminous and porous. One by one they flow through our 'serene and blessed mood,' transfiguring all the objects they touch."

For you that time may have come on a lonely bay. Or on a spring day, when the hush of the air was not hushed but vibrating with a calm and a kinship with all meanings, that was reflected in your own consciousness. It has come to the recluse in his cave, to the explorer on the lonely tundra, to the convert who kneels at the altar rail, to the soldier at his isolated post. Life and God, the past and the future, the now and the forever, were not mysteries. One enters into the majestic harmonies and tides and orders and is one with them —a part of them. In such a moment one feels there are no isolated cells to our years and experiences. They are blended into a smooth and significant unity, as the various cut and colored mosaic stones are blended by the artist into a composition of serene beauty.

Let me tell you of a personal experience which I have thought about many times. Some years ago I was at a concert given by the singer Marian Anderson. There was apprecia-

tive applause for the early numbers, which had been selected from the musical classics. Each person, I'm sure, was conscious of the place, the time, the singer. Like John Donne, who speaks somewhere of being conscious of a straw under his knee and other divisive sensations and thoughts when he was trying to concentrate on his prayers, so my mind wandered to work left undone and the tasks of tomorrow.

For her last number Miss Anderson sang the spiritual, "Were You There When They Crucified My Lord?" As she sang something happened that no words of mine have been able to fully express and bring to the surface of critical thought. The audience seemed to stop breathing—or breathed as one. There was no consciousness of self, no awareness of the gilded baroque ornamentation of the theater, nor of the accompanist, nor even of the singer. There was an X in the equation of experience, knowable but indescribable. I felt, and I assume from remarks heard later that many another felt too, a sense of expansion, of humility, of awe, of exultation. The words of the song were heard with the outward ear:

> Were you there when they nailed Him to the tree?
> O sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble—
> Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

But more than that, a message was communicated to the hearing of the soul. Deep wells of feeling were opened. Imagination was given wings for limitless soaring.

There was a particular awareness for me of my own life in totality, a past that went beyond the bounds of any conscious remembering, and a future that extended beyond the farthest bounds of anticipation. It was a sense of relatedness to and participation in eternity. But it was not static. If words must be used, I would say it was a sense of sharing

in a process that was moving imperturbably forward. That forward-moving tide was beautiful and good.

On only two other occasions I have known similar moments: once, in my study, during personal meditation, and again in a cemetery.

After the Marian Anderson concert I recall someone saying, "It really was a matter of minutes before I came back to reality." I wonder if it wouldn't have been more accurate to say, "It was some time before I came back from that luminous reality to the one I live with most of the time."

Of this I am sure: we are not alone in an irritating present, with tax collectors to fret us; with false goals of what we ought to gain or achieve; with fears of wrinkles or cancer or retirement. There is our past. There is the presence of our future. In some of the "realest" moments in our aloneness, the past and the present and the future can merge into a unity.

Recently I thought of the Lebanese poet-philosopher, Kahlil Gibran, as, from the heights of the Lebanon Mountains, I looked down on the Mediterranean and then traveled on to the Valley of Bekka on the other side of the range. I think of him now and of that setting in which he must have nurtured the thought, that the house in which we dwell cannot really shelter our longing or needs. With deftness he wrote, "That which is boundless in you abides in the mansion of the sky, whose door is the morning mist, and whose windows are the songs and the silences of night."

Honest and sensitive association with your past and your hopes of the future is one way to those high moments of insight which bless all your days.

In relating yourself with yesteryear there can come a feeling of kinship with the total heritage of history. You may

be the visible ice cap seen at the surface of the sea, but unseen beneath the vast waters is a great mass of ice of which you are a part. In it is the chronicle of geological history since the beginning of time. So your life is the visible point in time of much more than your conscious personal history. You are the representative of a family heritage. But that heritage, physically, psychologically, sociologically, is intertwined with the total history of the human race.

Such an awareness can give you ballast for the storms of today. This is patricularly so if, in your aloneness, you have identified your past with a genealogical branch of worth and health. You can do this with candor. Only ten generations back in your personal history you have more than a thousand great-great-grandparents. While you may be tied to all physically, which do you choose as your intellectual and spiritual kin? Will it be the horse-thieves or the judges? The deserters or the patriots? The hopeful and venturesome who dared build for a better future, or the fearful and uncertain who cuddled themselves to a comfortable present? The corpuscles of all may be in your veins, but whose mental and emotional blood really makes your heart pulse?

You can choose. And musing on your self of yesteryear gives the chance to make the identification.

Elijah, the ancient prophet, had a student who lived with him named Gehazi. One morning, from the walls of the city of Dothan, they saw themselves surrounded by powerful forces of their enemy. Gehazi was distraught with the fear that cries, "Oh dear, what shall we do? This surely is the end." The story tells how Elijah gave his wisdom: "They that are with us are greater than they that be with them." Then, the young man's eyes were opened, and he saw horsemen and soldiers and chariots in vast array, rising to the very battlements of heaven. These were on the side of the just

defenders of their city and homeland. With them there would surely be triumph over the fearsome enemy.

Such inner confidence can be yours if the noble forces of the past are given the chance to let their nobility touch you.

No one engages in this identification with the varied heritage of which he is a part without being affected by it. You are a part of some business or profession. As a homemaker or mother you stand in one of mankind's most essential channels for enriching the race. How many varied and fine individuals have contributed to the best of the work or place in which you stand!

In your personal life you can feel the strong influences of many people from so many walks of life. Not only parents but humble teachers, an old great-uncle whom you may have seen only once, the school janitor, the proprietor of the candy store, the coach of the swimming team, the delivery boy, the doctor, all touched your life and left their imprint on you.

It is so in the background of the traditions in which you find your vocation. The history of medicine has, in its Hall of Fame, members of many a race and nation and creed. In the early records are noted the influences from Arabia, Egypt, Rome, Greece. The roster of those who made significant contributions to the science of medicine contains such varied names as, Vesalius, Paré, Fracastoro, Sydenham, Sanctorius, Harvey, Borelli, Stahl, Boerhaave, von Haller, Spallanzani, Black, Priestley, Kölliker, Virchow, Metchnikoff.

One tiny chapter concerning a technique of eye surgery contains the name of Morgagni, at the University of Padua, who developed the theory. Then a Scot by the name of Matthew Baillie continued the experimentation, and a Russian by the name of Robitansky completed the technique in Vienna.

To sense such a heritage, which can be traced in any field

of consistent human endeavor, is to become broad in one's admirations. It leads to humility and gratitude. Those are gracious and strong virtues with which to face your today and your tomorrow.

How you and I need to shed the restricting skin of prejudice, to be free from the limiting idea that our life is only wrapped up and centered in the immediate. These make us petulant, ineffectual. They keep us from those generous sympathies and understandings by which the immediate moment can be judged with greater competence.

This should lead us to say to ourselves, "I shall winnow my memories. Let the unfortunate ones be as chaff. The good and the best—let those live in my present, ministering to my today."

One of the most intriguing thoughts from Jesus is that "the Kingdom is within you." He implies that life's satisfaction is not to be found in distant seeking. Its potential is within one's own aloneness. Surely one part of this kingdom is the living treasure of our good past. To go into the storehouse and see the fine garnering which you have thoughtfully saved is a way to peace and health.

You may be tempted to do an unworthy act now. Perhaps it is a deal "just within the letter of the law, but not fulfilling its spirit." At such a time there can be a saving guidance in remembering the boy within you who was asked to lead his third grade in the pledge of allegiance to the flag. How your heart enlarged with devotion as you said, "I pledge allegiance . . . with liberty and justice for all."

You can see that we are making our man of the past today. Each act, thought, feeling, experience happening now leaves the moving stage of life, to be added to that character in the

wings which we call our past. How intelligent today to be creating memories on which we may draw with gladness, as we prepare for tomorrow!

We see the pathetic quality in one who did not do so: Robert Schumann. He had not submitted himself to the discipline of aloneness. He had not acknowledged the duty to build a reserve. He was constantly "on tap" for any claim and call. Shaken and disintegrating with world weariness by his constant activity, he could not find comfort and sustenance in his man of the past. He had built a presence there who was just as frenzied as the man of the moment. The future was grim with a prospect of the same old grind, and the past offered no solace. Little wonder he fell into complete despair.

That tragedy may be alleviated for us as we cultivate a good past, and see too that *today* we are building a past we'd like to live with.

The word "balance" needs to get into the picture here. Marjorie Roulston put it well in a letter to me, "The happiest people are the ones who have learned to balance their time as they balance their meals. (But balancing time is harder.) They are not alone so much that they feel lonely or sorry for themselves, nor are they running around so constantly that they can't develop their minds or their characters."

Deliberately set apart some time to live with yourself, away from the noisy existence of the world. It pays satisfying dividends. Some valued ones come in friendship with our past—in seeing that it helps us today—and in seeing that our today makes it a finer one for tomorrow.

The other presence within us—that which we may become, the person of faith in tomorrow and hope for the future—it too keeps us from ever being alone. The man of yesteryear,

you say, is a drag on you. I don't believe it. Whatever is of drag should be straightened out by reason. It can be done. But even taking you at your word, you do not need to droop and pout in a present which you alone make so miserable. More important than what you have been and what you are is what you may become.

There is ever within you a potentiality, a possibility. There is always with you in your aloneness a person of confidence, of faith, of hope.

Some nameless rhymster wrote,

Think big, and your deeds will grow;
Think small, and you'll fall behind:
Think that you can, and you will.
It's all in the state of mind.

Life's battles don't always go
To the stronger or faster man,
But soon or late the man who wins
Is the fellow that thinks he can.

It is your future, where confidence will not die, that helps you with these larger thoughts that make larger satisfactions.

One of the most vicious enemies to our selfhood is the idea that life levels off onto a plateau from which we cannot rise. Look at the world and see the decay and death of the natural man and seemingly of all physical things. Try to keep physical health, but you fight a losing battle. There will come a round when you can't rise from the canvas. You scrap and save and acquire. But these things become as dust. Accumulations can be a hindrance rather than a help. And it is sure you "can't take them with you."

"Where can a person get some direction, some comfort?"

"It is within one's own solitude."

"But," you say, "I have trouble getting it there. I live with memories of my past. But they add to the emptiness of the present, when I see so much that I loved now gone. The future seems more hopeless still, for it is an escalator going down. I can't get off."

"My friend, you are wrong. There is a presence within you which your self-pity tries to deny. It is your spirit of hope. Yes, it is the same power that made you thrill as a child when you learned to tie your shoestring. The impossible was done. A whole new area of possibility was yours. It is the same presence that put an aura of limitless confidence around your mind when you held your graduation certificate in your hand. It is that 'self' within that linked you to tomorrow when you held your first-born in your arms.

"That self is not gone. As he has been with you in each hour of your aloneness across the years, so he is with you now."

"What can he do for me?" you ask.

"He can give significance to your today. He wants to save you from foolishly spending the present hours in aimless bitterness. He enables you to see how your past action and your attitude today has bearing on your future. He does not deny the law of cause and effect. He may help you to change present patterns, as he did for Old Scrooge. He says, 'With the way you are acting and thinking now, where will be your ending?' Then he adds, 'See the vision honestly. Is the result what you want it to be? Will you wish you might have done differently?—If so, change the rutted course! Oh, my friend, you can. You can. Do it now! I am here and always will be with you to help. I am your Spirit of Hope, your Confident Guide.' "

I write this as though it were for someone of advanced chronological age. But this imaginary conversation is not

only for the inhabitant of the wheelchair. It has pertinence for the adolescent who, at a moment of defeat or frustration, thinks life's possibilities are closed to him. It is for you, a mother, who may be overtired with the demands and routines of house and family, for whom a promising career now seems smothered by dirty dishes, laundry lists, and dusty rooms. In your dark aloneness let your hopeful self get an open hearing.

With the increasing interest in mental health, much is being made of the influence of a negative spirit and a neurotic mind on other people. Professor Edward Weiss of Temple University pointed out recently that "psychological contagion is as important as germs in causing illness." Your frustration can infect your family. Your neurotic self-pity can sour your friend, twist the spirit of your child.

But see that its first and prime damage is to your own selfhood. You brutally, and so unnecessarily, choke your own soul. That was the basic tragedy of Scrooge. True, he had damaging effect on others. But the most pitiable and unwarranted destruction was being done in his own potential, to his own soul.

You can bring inner health to yourself by making the acquaintance of your spirit of hope. I take no stock in the proposition that hope can die in a person with a normal mind. It is this ingredient which distinguishes us from a vegetable. To the degree we hinder its speaking to us, to that degree we allow our truest self to "vegetate."

It may taken generations for the full legacy of Dr. Albert Einstein to be evaluated. Most of us laymen are aware that his scientific discoveries and formulas have tremendous significance on the life of the human race. In addition to being a great scientist, Dr. Einstein was a great personality, a fine

human being. In 1950 he may have given the source of both his genius as a scientist and as a fine personality when he wrote: "The most beautiful and profound emotion we can experience is the mystical. It is the source of all true art and science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer pause to wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead, his eyes are closed."

This cleansing, uplifting experience of standing "rapt in awe" before the endless potentials and possibilities of life, is one to which your "self of the future" beckons and calls. He leads us from the path of death into life.

How do we let his presence be felt?

In your aloneness be truthful and honest in seeing that for some people life "never closed in." Some of the most radiant people you've known have been those who seemingly have the least reason for radiance. Recall those who, like Goethe, have affirmed that though the snows of winter have been on their brow, the spring of youth has been in their hearts. Let these personal observations lead you to the truth already claimed by your deepest consciousness that *life is growth.* Existence is seemingly marked for decay. "In the evening it is cut down and withereth."

But the life of the mind, the "growingness" of the soul, knows not such finality. It was made for continuity, for ever-expanding horizons. The physical Einstein may be dead. But his thoughts continue to attract and guide the minds of other men. And the essence of awe and hope that called out his discoveries live on in the infinite spirit that stands beckoning the soul of every man. It beckons you.

See, too, the truth that awareness of the closing doors of existence may give occasion for the door of expectancy to be pushed wider. I have seen physical decline prompt many a

person to engage in more profitable adventures of development. More than once I have known tragedy, which might have ruined an individual's life, do just the opposite. Instead, it opened another channel that permitted a continued useful and satisfying life.

As you acknowledge and stand in reverence and tranquillity before the truth of life's wonder, you become aware of a presence that is close to you—the presence from which you never want to escape and from which you never can—the presence of your hope and faith.

Many people find a renewing sense of hope as they engage in constructive reveries. The mind, released from captivity, roams over unmarked paths. Think of the unnumbered possibilities of the future. Think of the changes you have known in your own lifetime. Consider the forward steps made in the long history of civilization. Recall some of the great dreams of the race, whose banners are unfurled on the mystic heights of the future: "They shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruninghooks"; "behold I create all things new."

Our children have a book of puzzles which gives them much pleasure. One of the questions is, "What are the most wonderful things that man can build?" The answer, hidden in the back of the book reads, "Castles in the Air." Adults may smile at first at what appears to be a naïve answer. But reflection leads them to see the deep truth of the reply. The lofty visions, the generous expectations, the idealistic hopes, the majestic purposes of the mind and soul of man are truly our most wondrous achievements. To man alone is given the priceless gift of expectancy, and so too the capacity to mold his today upon the vision of tomorrow.

Sometimes, in aloneness, if you will go back and recapture

the dreams that once were yours and which you think have been inundated under the harsh life of maturity, you find a way to strengthen your hope.

Then, too, acquaintance with great individuals who have lived or who are living, with courage and hope, can bring your own expectations to a warm reality. I find the biographies of strong and inspiring individuals a means of inner renewal. Emerson, you know, said that the response we make to such is evidence of a kinship within us. Otherwise we would not respond. If you have a jaded feeling about human nature, read the biography of Gandhi or Albert Schweitzer. If you are confused and questioning about the vitality of religion, read the record of Grenfell of Labrador. The hopes and devotions of men like these can make more stalwart your own hope and devotion.

This I know. You have a self of the past. You are possessed of a self of expectancy for tomorrow. These are ever with you. They can do you great good, not ill. Used well, they can keep you from ever being lonely in your precious aloneness.

Alexander Woollcott once used an analogy which I feel has meaning for us here. He portrays a traveler in the town of Chartres. Clustered houses and narrow streets keep him from truly appreciating the grandeur of the Cathedral, as he stands before it. But journeying from the town, and pausing on a distant slope, he sees how that glorious structure rises majestically above all the surrounding buildings. It stands, in bold serenity, against the sky.

In the same way aloneness can enable us to see the grandeur of our past. Twisted, dark streets were there, but the perspective of solitude enables us to see what was abidingly important and good.

But the traveler must go on. Yet, as he faces the unknown, the beauty he has known in yesteryear leads the heart to build a yet more glorious structure to which he lifts his eyes. And, though the sun is setting behind him, he journeys on toward the place of the dawn.

Chapter 5

The Hidden Heroes of the Heart

It seems only yesterday that the world was thrilling to the amazing stamina of the defenders of Dienbienphu. After weeks of savage attack by overwhelming forces the little outpost fell. But I believe all who read the record of the qualities shown there will not call it defeat. The heart of man will ever thrill to the inner resources which that desperate situation called forth—resources that glorify the human race and make us proud to call ourselves human beings.

Who were the defenders of that insignificant outpost in the jungles of southeastern Asia? Vietnamese troops; youthful French officers fresh from the military schools of France; bearded legionnaires of many races; soldiers from Algeria; and a woman who shared their fate. She might have left. But nurse Genevieve de Galard-Terraube stayed to minister to the victims of the brutal conflict.

They were not supermen. Not reincarnations of the ancient gods with supernatural power to bend the course of events. I understand that one of the survivors responded to

the comment, "We didn't think you had it in you," by answering, "Neither did we."

Yes, they were people like you and like me—people who found under the tortures of relentless circumstance inner resources they didn't know they possessed.

There are powers within us which we do not use. You may permit yourself to live a grubby, mediocre life. But there are hidden heroes in your heart. The motto of a church in the state of Missouri reads, "We believe that the power behind us is greater than the task ahead." Rephrase that motto to read, "The powers within me are greater than I know," and you have the theme of this chapter.

We engage in such foolish, time-wasting searches to try to improve our estate or outlook on life, when the finest answers are in our own mind and soul. So often we are like the family out in California who became weary of the house in which they were living. They complained about all the irritating inconveniences which daily troubled them. In a fit of despair they put the property in the hands of a real estate agent. Of necessity they began reading advertisements for a new place. Life was really going to be better from now on. One day they came across an ad that offered the perfect home: fine grounds, desirable neighborhood, good schools and churches, convenience to shopping area, wonderful for children, bound to increase in value, etc., etc. In a dither of excitement they rang the number listed, only to learn to their dismay that it was their own home which had been described.

How we sell ourselves short! We laugh at the folly of the man who disposes of his farm and prospects the whole world, looking for diamonds, and who, weary and worn, returns to find that all the time there were diamonds in the stones he cursed on his unproductive land. We read of children on the Maine coast, described by Dr. Rufus Jones, who could not

answer the question, "Where is the Atlantic Ocean?" It provided livelihood for their family. It sang a lullaby to their infancy and yet they didn't know where or what it was. Yes, we smile indulgently at that ignorance.

Yet I see people permitting one small part of their personality to twist themselves out of shape. Then they run to the psychiatrist for an answer that lies only within themselves. I see others fishing for new experiences anywhere and everywhere on the seven seas and not casting any net in the one place where they can make a golden catch. That place is in the endless caverns and the unplumbed depths of their own potential.

I think it was Marcus Aurelius to whom is attributed the observation that weak men seek retreats—strong men carry them within them. But we are all strong in this sense, if only we would recognize it. There are tremendous powers within us which we always have and which are only partially sensed or used.

We see ordinary people doing extraordinary things. It is the soldier, medal on breast, saying, "I just did my duty. It had to be done. I don't know quite how. But I did it." We see an aged couple of necessity torn from the home where their whole life has been spent. But they do not whimper; they face the future with confidence. You see it in that harum-scarum lad next door, who seemed to be headed straight for the dogs. But look at him now, honors at the university, married to a fine young woman, and making steady progress in his business. "Who would have thought it?"

One of England's finest scientists was John Tyndall, who followed Sir Humphry Davy and Michael Faraday as lecturer at the British Institution, which is comparable to our own Smithsonian Institution. That man, with his fine scientific

mind and responsive character, pushed his body to the point where he had a severe physical breakdown. The remaining years of his life had to be spent as an invalid. During those long years he was cared for with the tenderest devotion by his wife. He wrote about her in a letter to Herbert Spencer, "She has raised my ideal of the possibilities of human nature."

What a tribute that is! But it's one you and I can make of many, many people whose lives have touched ours. We have seen capacities to make hard adjustments that came when the demand for change was present. We have seen resources of courage, powers of persistence and patience under difficulty, which we didn't imagine were there. Of such can we not say, as did John Tyndall of his wife, "They have raised my ideal of the possibilities of human nature."

Such latent potentials seen coming to flower in others—those powers lie, budlike, within us too.

One of the most impressive needs of our generation is for the development of individuals competent to handle the new potentials of the Atomic Age. Someone has said that if any future war is fought with hydrogen bombs, the following one, if any members of the human race are left, will be fought with clubs. To guide us from such catastrophe individuals of vast wisdom, breadth, and courage will have to do the guiding. Their strength cannot come from the external perplexities and problems. It will come from the untapped inner reservoirs of the mind and the soul.

The need is just as great in your personal development. You cannot escape the influence of and participation in the outward dilemmas that besiege mankind. Then, too, private troubles cloud your daily life. Where will you get your solutions and guidance? From phrenologists, brokers, psychologists, from deeper immersion in the round of "socially ac-

cepted" activity? No, you will have to take to heart the words of Cassius:

> The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,
> But in ourselves, that we are underlings.

You will have to remake from within the individual capable of dealing with the era that is yours today. And you can. For there are ever with you inner heroes, giants, noblemen, who can make you competent for any and every exigency of the day.

It is one of my deepest convictions that in the center of our being exists a desire, a need, to fulfill the highest of our several selves. As I see it, both Kant's emphasis on "the moral law within" and Nietzsche's "will to power" recognize the potent drives within the soul of man which seeks a positive fulfillment. The will to do good, to be good, is rooted far beneath the surface of each person's "seen" life. We are not made for mediocrity. When we do not heed the whispers and calls of the hidden heroes, hollowness and frustration come to tell us so. We are not happy with ourselves.

Some years ago Bishop Angus Dunn of the Washington Cathedral told a group of students of an etching he possessed. It sought to portray the Creating Spirit of God as He spoke to Jesus before His entrance into the stream of human life. I have often thought of that portrayal, which I have never seen, and of the words that might have been spoken, which I have never heard. Yet, from the observation of man's foibles and his inner resources, I can imagine the All-Creating Spirit saying, "I made man to travel 'twixt the darkness and the light. In him is the breath of heaven and the soil of the earth. He will hear whispers of nobility. Yet he must walk the ways of evil. He will falter. He will fall. The dreamless dust whence he came will ever seek to claim him back again.

"But on the hidden altars of his soul I have set alight the lamps of truth, of love, of courage, integrity, faith, and freedom. He may seek to stop their glow. He may so live by the clamor of the world that it may seem the lights are no more. But they are ever there. Teach him to walk more by these. Call him more and more to the way of Triumph. Help him break the hold of the dust that I may claim him as my own and that He may come to know me in the glory of his aloneness."

One of the great powers we possess is that of decision. This is a hidden hero who is ever with us as we make choices, however small and seemingly insignificant they may seem. By establishing the pattern of making decisions, we weaken the tendency to vacillate, to hang on the garden gate, getting nowhere.

Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt said, "I do not waste my time in indecision or regret." Too many of us do just the opposite. We do not take a stand. We twitter and dawdle, listening to everyone else's opinions and advice. Rather than mulling the matter over in our aloneness, we turn on Commentator X to hear what he has to say. Or we scurry around asking everybody what we should do, when the only decision is within ourselves. We weaken one of the sleeping giants of our selves, the capacity to rise and say, "Here I stand."

A beautifully integrated woman I know years earlier divorced her husband, reared her daughter, provided a home for both, achieved success in a career in the field of art, and is a bulwark, holding up and inspiring her family and wide circle of friends. I asked her to share with you and me some of her thinking and experience in dealing with her aloneness. With characteristic responsiveness she gave me a thoughtful, well-written account of her inner struggles. There

was also an additional paper, written in her own hand, explaining certain dominant ideas that influenced her. And in addition there was a personal note, warm with best wishes. As I read her thoughts there came to mind the counsel of Jesus to live generously—to go not one mile, but two!

A significant element all through her journal lay in the decisions she made. As she arrived at each one, after questioning and heart-searching, she seemed to take an upward step toward greater self-reliance and confidence. Powers and capacities to deal with difficulty were released in proportion to the decisiveness at any one crossroad.

After telling of a family background where she was enfolded with a faith in the goodness of life and God, and where there was imparted a strong sense of right and wrong, she wrote, "When I tried to come to a *decision* about divorce (unheard of in our strict Methodist background), it seemed I had to weigh it from every angle. Would it be fair to him, good for my daughter, right on my part, etc.? Also, should I give him additional opportunities to 'do something' about drinking? Even when I *decided* to go to Reno I remember praying all the way out there, on the train, to 'Please God, do turn me back to New York if this is not right!'

"Less than a year later my sister asked if I could take my mother because she was going to have to move. The *decision* seemed to be clear-cut. There was only one. It was of course, 'Yes.' I didn't have the money to move into a four-room apartment. Nevertheless I leased one. . . ."

The question of remarriage was faced. "I thought of it this way: my daughter was my most serious and important mission—to prepare her for a happiness of her own. For her to have to share me with someone else didn't seem exactly right. . . . In her last year of school I began to feel she was soon to graduate not only educationally but psychologically too.

She would have other friends, confidants, activities. I would be alone quite soon. So I *decided* to attend the teacher's course in our church, in the event I might be used. . . .

"At that time I *decided* to work on portraits. That helped assuage the sense of self-pity and loneliness that tried to creep into my spirit. Also I began a program of 'everyday outgoingness.' It was deliberate at first but soon became a way of life. I started by turning my thoughts away from myself the very first thing in the morning. It always seems so easy to think of one's self! How do I feel? Do I like the weather we're having? What shall I wear? How do I look today? What shall I eat? All these things, I *decided,* are non-constructive, non-productive, and just plain negative. I *decided* to think of something positive. What could I do that day for someone else? With that *decision* I took the first step of the morning. I found that there are so many, many ways of doing for others. I now realized, as I write you, that it's been a long time since I have felt lonesome."

Take a minute to read again those selected sentences from her letter to me, and note the number of times she has written the word *decision,* which I have taken the liberty of italicizing.

Whenever you stop floundering before any little problem or question, you are filled with a buoyancy; a release of strength and confidence that flows through you. One small act of decisiveness keeps the doors oiled and opened for the next major one to be made. The hidden giant of strength within is waking up.

Dr. Rollo May, in his most commendable volume, *Man's Search for Himself,* sees the power of this kind of affirmation. Understanding increases; the ability to make better decisions tomorrow comes from the act of making one today; the capacity for responsibility is enlarged; and the individual

grows in integration as, in spite of continued struggle, doubt and conflict, he assumes the risk in his decision. But more than this, he writes, ". . . it is often overlooked that conscious decisions, if they are soundly and not precipitately or defiantly made, can change the direction in which unconscious forces push. . . . There are potentialities within us for health which are not released until we make a conscious decision. Allegorically, the individual's decision is like that of the Israelites in their battle against the army of Sisera: 'the stars in their courses fought against Sisera,' but not until the Israelites decided to fight too."

This capacity to decide and act is not only in the statesman or in the hero of artistic or philosophical questing. It is not limited to rare individuals who seemingly rise above the herd as reformers, pioneers, or discoverers. The power is latent in all of us. The difference is that some have sought to develop and unleash the hero of decision and action within.

I plead with you to make use of your own. Do it not for the sake of others but for *your own sake*. Kierkegaard said, "To venture causes anxiety, but not to venture is to lose one's self—and to venture in the highest sense is precisely to become conscious of one's self." You *find* a significant part of yourself, a part you'll like to live with, in your aloneness. You can then decide and do what that decision directs.

Most often a dynamic chain reaction within is set off. Powers of courage, integrity, love, wonder, and expectancy rise to take their important places in your aloneness.

It is reported that as Socrates described the ideal life and portrayed the perfect society, Glaucon said, "I do not believe that there is such a City of God anywhere on earth." To this Socrates replied, "Whether such a city exists in heaven or ever will exist on earth, the wise man will live after

the manner of that city, having nothing to do with any other, and in so looking upon it, will set his own house in order."

If you let the truth get a hearing with your consciousness: that you could live so much more richly than you are; if you see the inspiring lives of others and gain the conviction that the abilities you see in them can be approximated within your own heart; if you let the vision of a useful, happy life that could and should be yours stand before you: you can live with no other. You may never completely fulfill the vision. There will be much that is discouraging. But you will find that great spirits within you will be present, strong and resistant, to help you meet what has to be met.

The experience of the Apostle Paul can be yours. He knew what it was to question and doubt, to stumble and fall. Discouragement, rejection, pain, did not pass him by. Yet he grew in higher stature and energy and influence. His secret? "Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." One of the greatest heroes of the inward man is he who says, "*There* is the way. I must decide now to follow it. I can take it—and I will."

Another hero of the heart who deserves special consideration is the ability to grow in understanding and comprehension. Carl Sandburg tells of Lincoln coming in his young manhood out of the backwoods, to the village of New Salem. At the gristmill run by the Rutledges and the Camerons, he began to listen to conversation, not just about local crops but about national problems. He was given books to read by Mr. Graham, the schoolteacher, who also organized the first debating society in the village. It was before this group that Abraham Lincoln made his first speech. Sandburg, intent and sensitive to the factors that produced one of our

greatest Americans, wrote of this period, "There was talk and enterprise to sharpen the mind. It was in New Salem that young Lincoln [I like this phrase] began to find himself."

You can enrich your weekly diet of experience by putting yourself in a situation experienced by Lincoln. Spiritual proteins and intellectual vitamins are here. There are books on the library shelves which can "stretch your mind." They can stimulate and call out resources which get buried by the day's uneventful routines. You'll find that you are bringing a new person to do what you've been doing in the same old way for much too long.

There are interesting people you have taken no initiative in cultivating. Why not talk to that young man who has intelligent opinions about the United Nations? And those neighbors, who lived for a time in Arabia—invite them over for dinner. Then plan how you can learn from them. What really are the problems economically, socially, religiously in the Middle East? How can the Israel-Arab States friction be resolved? You can begin to grow "in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man." You begin to find yourself, or more accurately, an important part of yourself: your capacity for knowledge, understanding, and wisdom.

That self can be a solid and reliable companion when the external skies are overcast, when the hot-water system breaks down, the children are unappreciative, and you are tempted to wonder if your life has been misspent.

Existing in the close trilogy of the hero of decisiveness and the nobleman of understanding is the "valuing" self. This sleeping giant within us has deep levels of insight, ethical sensitivity, and awareness. Sometimes he is called "intuition" or "wisdom" or "the divine perception of the heart." He is

a powerful force in keeping you from being confused by the standards, or lack of them, in the world about you.

T. S. Eliot, a generation ago, described the emptiness of individuals molded by an era that had lost its guideposts:

> We are the hollow men
> We are the stuffed men
> Leaning together
> Headpiece filled with straw. Alas!
>
> Shape without form, shade without color,
> Paralyzed force, gesture without motion. . . .

But there is a self that knows beauty to be more important than busyness, that truth will outlast the material works of man. Styles and fashions proclaim that hair must be wind-blown or hurricane-swept this season. Worldly creatures point their fingers at you, saying you really aren't quite in the main stream if you don't have a sports car or a genuine imitation mink stole. But an inner voice knows these things are untrue, and will tell you so, if you will listen.

This inner voice can reveal secrets from the storehouse of eternal wisdom—secrets that can adorn your life with graciousness. Pain may wrack your body, troubles may torment your mind, but you will know of a victory over pain that even death itself can never claim. This voice can tell you of a peace which no storm of anxiety can disturb, and seeks to keep you from sheeplike conformity, preserving the uniquely angled qualities that make you the individual you are.

It has been said that the French painter Massonier wouldn't hesitate to erase a whole picture on which he had labored long, if it did not satisfy his inward sense. Customers might praise. Connoisseurs would offer to buy. It made no differ-

ence. "I have someone," he said, "who is more difficult to please than you. I must satisfy myself." It was the noble, valuing self that kept his standard high and made Massonier what he was. It could be so with you and me.

And how do we do it? We do it by creating a physical environment in which this hidden hero can grow. Take time in every day, as Anne Lindbergh recommends, to be completely alone. Find a silent place. Select an occasion when there are the least possible noises and intrusions from the outside. Then physically relax. Let the muscles around the eyes, cheeks, lips, be in complete repose. Let your whole body know the same relaxation. Then the mind is free of its concerns and anxieties. The regret at what is left undone and the worry over what is to be done are dissolved, like snow under the sun.

Now let the "feelings" of the mind be centered on one of life's deepest questions—only one—"What is my real purpose in life?" or "How can life be made happy?" or "What influence of mine will go the deepest and last the longest?" Don't fight with the question. Don't get tense about it. It arose out of some secret depth. The answer will come from the same mysterious source of all wonder and wisdom, where it was born.

I do not say to you that engaging in such an act will give you in a moment the full and exact blueprint as to what you are and where you ought to be going. It doesn't work that way any more than practicing at the piano for half an hour will make you a concert pianist. But with even the scantiest practice, you will find yourself going back to the breakfast dishes or the office routine with a refreshment and perspective you didn't have before. The point where mind and emotion meet in your hidden depths may have been touched.

Into your consciousness creeps a sense of unity, a confidence that permits you to take more ably the next steps ahead.

As you continue the practice, you can start to consider other questions, letting the light of everlasting wisdom and right play on an immediate problem that troubles you. You will increase the comprehension that makes for peace and humble self-assurance.

A tremendous power within us to ward off the demon of loneliness and which blesses our aloneness is the capacity for wonder and enthusiasm. The scientist sees awe as the springboard of discovery and research. The theologian has seen it as the essence of religion, a bowing before the *mysterium tremendum* of creation, of "now and forever." It is for every man a wellspring of life. And the spring need never go dry, though the body that contains the spirit becomes shriveled and old.

Of course we can let it go dry. Perhaps this hidden hero is the easiest of all to stifle and forget. But his loss is irreparable. The concern which Jesus shows for children is for me an exciting part of the New Testament. It was a major interest of His, else the scanty records would not give such a dominant place to words and acts of the Master with reference to children. His thinking is summarized in the words, "Except ye become as a little child, ye cannot enter the kingdom of Heaven."

It is clear that Jesus was not calling men to act like infants. This is no appeal for an adult to regress to childishness. No, Jesus is concerned with a maturity of thinking and action that achieves an abundant life. What He is saying is that the abundant life cannot be gained without the ingredient of eagerness, wonder, enthusiasm, which is the charm of childhood. His statement also assumes that we have that ability,

no matter what our chronological age. If it were hopeless of recovery or cultivation, Jesus would have put the statement in a different form: "Would that ye could become as little children," or: "It is only the little child who can enter the Kingdom . . ."

Recently I had occasion to observe this delightful quality in a child and, through her eyes, to realize that the capacity was not dead in myself. During vacation time I was, for two hours, with my two-year-old daughter Deborah, on a shopping jaunt to our village seven miles away.

Hand in hand we started from the back door toward the car in the barn. On that brief trek she had to stop to pat the dog good-by, break away to try to catch a butterfly, pause under the cottonwood tree to watch the way the wind was shaking the leaves, and study a caterpiller who piously humped his way across our path.

In the car and headed down the country road, bordered by pines and a shining creek, I was completely absorbed in the forthcoming errands and how to manage them efficiently: "The barber shop first, then the hardware store. I mustn't forget that order of copper sulphate at the druggist's. And the grocers . . ." I was broken from my mundane reverie by my daughter's crying. Her chatter and squeaks had fallen on heedless ears up to that point. Pointing her finger toward the deserted schoolhouse, she was weeping, "Baby mice, asleep. Sad. Sad."

The family adventure came flashing back. We had found a nest of baby mice in the barn. The adult decision was definite. There were enough mice on hand without adding to the population. Debbie's eyes twinkled delight at holding a little mouse in her hands. Big brother suggested that we might go into the mouse-raising business. A compromise, approaching genius, won the day: the mice would be taken

to the old schoolhouse—far enough away from our house—lots of mice there, they'd find a good home and friends, etc., etc. But Debbie's sorrow at parting with new friends, two of whom didn't have their eyes open and so must be asleep, had come back again. How could I have forgotten so soon? For Debbie the delight and poignancy were still so real!

In a wink her face, screwed into sorrow and still wet with tears, was aglow with laughter as she saw a pony try to scratch himself against a post at the next farm.

In the next two hours, giving myself over to trying to see what little Debbie saw, I became aware of things on the road over which I had traveled a thousand times, but had never "seen" to the point of letting them "register."

There was a dilapidated barn. "Barn broke. Too bad. Too bad." Workmen repairing the shoulders of the highway were not just dusty men causing delay to the motorist. They were brown gods with their magic "tactors" pushing and lifting the "dirty dirt." And the junk yard, with its acres of twisted and rusting trucks, was a strange, sorrowful place of "broke car." I was assured that "Debbie funny" when we passed a herd of cows and my partner chirped, "Cow go bow wow." Our car almost went into a ditch as I looked at the curly head, impish eyes, laughing mouth, to take in more fully this riotous humor.

My cataloguing of the fascinations of the hardware and grocery stores, the riding horse tied in front of the druggist's, the impedimenta at the barber's, as seen by Deborah, could go on and on. Life was endlessly fascinating, and there was limitless response to its fascination. To Debbie any gadget or tool she did not understand, such as the big crane by the roadside or the barber's clippers, she labeled a "toy."

"When and why," I asked myself, "do we let living stop being fun? When do we stop calling our tools 'toys' and let

play go out of our work till it's only drudgery? Why do we quit observing and asking questions? How can we permit the precious, powerful self that wonders and ponders and appreciates, to be suffocated?"

Certainly it was true that there were as many or more frontiers for me than there were for a two-year-old lassie. Like the classic scientific lecture on "A Piece of Chalk," there were enough intriguing questions and possibilities in any one of the simple sights to occupy the questing of a lifetime for the most mature adult. The best-informed had only gathered a few grains of sand on the infinite shore of what is to be known.

One answer is that we become lazy. We take the line of least resistance. It's easier to ask no questions than to ask them and discover that finding the answers takes some effort. We let the mind become flabby. As we do that we commit a serious sin against the spirit—the spirit that lifts us from existence into life, that distinguishes us from the earthworm and the sumac bush, that bids us stand before the mystery of creation and exalt with wonder, to bow with humility and then with love and eagerness to walk toward the unknown. The carelessness and indifference of the passing years can put this delightful companion of our aloneness into a nonproductive sleep. But with even the slightest time given to wondering what makes grass green, to the seeing how many tints and shades we can identify in the evening sky, there is an eager spirit that comes alive in our solitude. It keeps us from loneliness and makes us glad of the gift of life.

There is a giant of courage in you. Do you think you are a weakling, a picayune person driven by the social tides and international trends over which you have no control? Do

you think there are hardships and tragedies that could really subdue you? It isn't so!

What we call "society" is the result of you and me. It is our thinking, our wants, our convictions, our needs, that make up social trends. History is the result of the integrity, courage, persistence, and genius of individuals. And as for personal history, there is no humiliation, no "defeat" that the hidden hero of courage in the heart cannot meet and master. Socrates drinking the hemlock, Joan of Arc at the stake, Jesus on the cross, are not among those defeated. They are the victors, telling us that a similar nobility is within us all to meet and overcome any obstacle.

In the writings of St.-Exupéry there is an account of an airman whose plane crashed in the Andes. The cold was bitter, the snow deep. The place where he fell was seemingly inaccessible. Yet he began the long, torturous trek down the frozen peaks. More than once he collapsed. A deceptive languor, the desire to stay in the comfortable snow, crept over him. But his conscious mind recalled that a man always has strength for one more step. In great pain, he rose and took that one step. Taking one, he found there was strength for another. More than thirty hours later he was still walking. Half frozen, but erect, he was finally brought into the warmth of a hamlet, far below the death-gripping heights.

That courage and persistence is in your heart and will be known, if you let it, most especially in your solitariness. I sometimes think it is wise to consider every possible disaster and sorrow that could happen to you. Then in the silences of your heart, say to each, "You could not make me a cringing slave. Even you I could overcome."

Margaret Rudkin of Pepperidge Farm fame tells how her grandmother used to quote the old Irish saying, "God broadens the back to bear the burden." When a member of the

family faced difficulty or the uncertainty of some new project, this would be quoted, and the counsel was added, "Don't be afraid to step out. You won't be alone." True! You are never alone. There is a hero of courage who will rise with you to face the problem.

This is thrillingly portrayed in a page from the book of Isaiah. A watchman is seen standing on the wall of Jerusalem, looking in the direction of the enemy. His eyes follow the trail toward the chief city of the Philistines, the frightening city of Bozra. As the shadows of the night melt before the dawn, he sees a lone figure, one man. The garments of the strange traveler are torn and bloodstained. He is coming from the forbidding city of Bozra. The cry goes out, "Who is this that cometh from Bozra with bloodstained garments?"

"It is I traveling in the strength of my new found might," comes the reply.

Again the suspicious watchman challenges, "Wherefore art thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine vat?"

The answer comes, "I have trodden the winepress alone: I looked and there was none to help [and then these great words], *therefore mine own arm brought salvation and my fury it upheld me.*"

It appeared to be an impossibility for one man to enter and come out of Bozra alive. An army might do it. But surely not a lone individual. Still, it happened. There he was on the plain, a solitary, bloodstained victor. How could he do it? The answer is that he was not just one lone individual. He was not alone. Hidden strengths of courage within rose to strengthen him in his portentous hour. "Mine own arm brought salvation."

This hero of courage and those of decisiveness, understanding, wisdom, and enthusiasm grow as you keep contin-

ual acquaintance with yourself. Be attentive to your own responsive centers. David Seabury counsels, ". . . treat a conversation with your friends as a chance to listen impersonally to the quickening energies of your mind; use the opportunity to increase your receptivity." Again he urges, "Find your spirit constantly talking when you speak, feeling when you think, picturing when you listen, abiding while you live, in all you are and do."

Practicing this art is important. It keeps you from being alone. It makes of solitude a fruitful, happy experience. Equally important, it pulls into integration what you outwardly do, and appear to be, with what you inwardly desire. The inner potentials are related to and flow into the tasks and responsibilities that claim you.

The average individual makes an adjustment between his different selves, though he "appears at times one thing to some people, and something altogether different to others." However, Dr. Edward A. Strecker observes that those who permit themselves to be divided into water-tight compartments are "hopelessly contradictory and ineffective."

One area where we can decrease our contradictions and increase our effectiveness is by knowing and utilizing the selves which we inwardly are. The hidden heroes, our unrealized potential, can give a strength and confidence to our daily living. They can unify, they can help build our character—one that faces today with confidence and the future without fear.

There are other mighty men in your heart. There is a nobleman of elasticity, whose gift of the capacity to change and adjust is indispensable to successful living. There is a hero of love, whose ability to serve mankind with generous

good will is usually only partly realized. These will be considered more fully later on.

I asked Mary Margaret McBride her thoughts on our theme and she answered through her newspaper column. Among other fine observations she wrote, "For the thinking, alert person, there is always a substitute for the dearest treasure lost.

"I know women who, to fill their minds with creative thoughts, have taken courses in languages, studied stenography, flower-arranging, started small businesses in their homes. I know others who, in a sort of helpless despair, have sunk deeper and deeper into the mire of their own negative thinking. The latter are the ones who keep the doctor's waiting room full."

From her wide experience Miss McBride knows whereof she speaks. My observation verifies hers. I too have known many sad people who feel only an emptiness, a hollowness. They have failed to cultivate their own resources. They have been too selfish. They have not let the capacities of mental growth give them breadth of understanding. They have failed to let a vital heritage of faith become their own. And they have not made friendship with their hidden heroes.

One elderly woman I know is caustic in word and bitter in spirit. No one likes to see her. Yet she frets and badgers and whines at acquaintances because they make limited efforts to call on her. Completely self-centered, she wraps herself more closely in her own misery as she faces the colder evening at the end of life's day.

But I know this about her—that the sour, unpleasant person you see in her now isn't all there is to her. There is a girl, forgotten and seemingly lost, who cuddled her first doll. There is a young woman who stood at life's threshold know-

ing that there was beauty and that living was to be a grand and selfless adventure. That woman may close herself increasingly in the restricting compartment of present aches and past disappointments. But it is not the only compartment of her life. She commits the sin of letting aloneness become loneliness. She is unwilling to pay the small but so rewarding price of releasing the neglected heroes of her heart.

I hope you will not make that error. If you have been making it, start changing the pattern now. Goethe once advised that we should look out for the things we want at the age of twenty, for we will have them at forty. I feel that he was right. We can get what we want. You can find and achieve almost anything in the world. One of the most important things to achieve is friendship and oneness with yourself, which will keep your searching and finding from turning into dust and ashes.

Remember the words of the wise Solomon: "The eyes of the fool are in the ends of the earth." You don't have to travel the universe. Look within! See and know your best potential. Let your life be blessed by searching not for some mythical jinni but for the hidden heroes within your own heart.

Chapter 6

The Presence of God

I have before me a one-page printed statement entitled "I Believe in the Future." It begins, "I am an incorrigible optimist." The statement is written by Dr. Arthur J. Brown. At the top of the article are the words, "Notes at 94." In his own clear hand on the tear sheet he sent me, Dr. Brown has penned, *"equally true at 98."*

Twelve years ago our family lived in a building in upper Manhattan, next to one where Dr. Brown and his daughter had their apartment. From time to time we met on the street. There was always a "radiation" from that wonderful man in even the most casual encounter. He stood straight. His eyes were alive—quizzical, interested, but reflecting a deep inner solidity and assurance. His mouth was firm. There was a kindly comprehension, as though he were on a high escarpment of life, yet did not belittle the lower levels of the plain. Once, after a brief chat on the sidewalk, my son whispered, "I'd like to be an old man like that."

I responded, "Son, I could never call Dr. Brown an old man. It's true, he's lived many years. Be like him! But remember him as a man who has found some important secrets

which keep him from getting old inside and which always make life new."

Dr. Brown at eighty-five underwent a critical operation. The surgeon said it was his philosophy of life that contributed primarily to his recovery. The patient replied, "Not my philosophy but my religion." He said he went to the operating room with a quiet mind. He sensed a Presence beside him saying, "Let not your heart be troubled, I am with you."

His counsel, as he approaches the century mark, as to how to make life worthwhile is this: "One should have a useful purpose; seek it diligently; form alliance with others of like purpose; have *unshaken faith that beneath the surface tumult of the world there runs deep and strong the mighty current of God's eternal purpose.* In the glory of this conviction, though my clock of time points to an evening hour, morning is in my heart."

Somewhere, where the eternal spirit of man is claimed, I feel that the spirit of Dr. Brown will go on writing, "equally true . . ." no matter where the hands point on the clock of eternity.

You are never alone. God is always with you as He has been with Dr. Brown. You may ignore the Presence. You may not have faith in God. You may even think there is no such thing, no personality, power, or presence, which others call God. It does not matter. That which centuries of men have labeled God is inescapable.

In Joan Henry's *Yield to the Night* a conversation is recorded between a woman who awaits her execution in the death cell and a guard named McFarlane.

The condemned woman asks, " 'Your religion, Miss McFarlane—it means a lot to you?'

" 'I couldn't live without it.' And Miss McFarlane softly

continues: 'God is with us all, whether we believe in Him or not—even when we cannot feel His presence.' "

That conversation is a modern counterpart of the biblical assurances: "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, thou art with me." "Though I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,—Though I make my bed in hell—behold Thou art there."

It is in our aloneness that we begin to appreciate most fully the upholding reality of God's spirit, the spirit of perfect justice, of love and goodness, truth and peace. Ezra Taft Bensen, Secretary of Agriculture, tells of being reared in a family of eleven children. Daily he saw his father and mother living without fear or frustration, because of their deep faith in God. The father's faith was passed on to the children in these words, "Remember that whatever you do or wherever you are, you are not alone. Our Heavenly Father is always near you. You can reach out and receive His aid through prayer."

That fine Mormon father put in his own words the biblical teaching that God loves you. He is with you always, even unto the end.

God's presence and the power emanating from its cultivation is so clearly expressed in the life of Jesus. From one standpoint you can say He was a solitary, lonesome man. He had no home, so few intimates, no geographical roots that gave him the sense of belonging. His insights were so far beyond His contemporaries that He found it difficult to communicate. Little support could He find from others. With His rare sensitivity He knew of the agony of the Cross before its torturing weight was on His shoulders. How lonely and bitter might have been His life! Yet it wasn't. As far as being alone, He affirmed just the opposite. "He that sent me is with me. He hath not left me alone."

I feel that we do no irreverence to Jesus in taking His words and applying them to ourselves. Say to your deepest consciousness, "He that sent me is with me." Yes, we were brought into this world by our parents. But we can also affirm that what we are in our uniqueness, our aloneness, was sent into the world by the creating power we call God. This is one of the strong tenets of the Christian faith. It affirms that we are not here by chance, nor is the uniqueness that is you and me a casual coincidence. We are not flotsam drifting on an indifferent sea. We are God's children. We are sent. Because we are sent and because we are God's, we are to make some contribution to His cause. We are, in His name, to leave this world better than we found it. We are to fulfill the special place which is distinctly ours. And, as a parent lovingly follows the mission on which his child is sent, so God's concern is with us in the purposes for which we are intended. He does not leave us alone!

It is to the point to attempt to make a reasonable definition of the term God. No concept is more difficult to define. The Bible says "God is love." For Carlyle, God was the force in history that makes for righteousness. Gandhi could not accept the idea of God as a power in the heavens. He said, "God is an unseen Power residing within us and nearer to us than fingernails to the flesh." So, too, Jan Van Ruysbroeck related the divine within the soul of man with the divine external power. He affirmed, "God in the depths of us receives God who comes to us: It is God contemplating God."

With mystic sensitivity Kahlil Gibran sees God as the all-creative force known in all aspects of creation: He writes, "Among the hills, when you sit in the cool shade of the white poplars, sharing the peace and serenity of distant fields and meadows—then let your heart say in silence, 'God rests in season.' And when the storm comes, and the mighty wind

shakes the forest, and thunder and lightning proclaim the majesty of the sky—then let your heart say in awe, 'God moves in passion.' And since you are a breath in God's sphere, and a leaf in God's forest, you too should rest in season and move in passion."

One of the classic definitions of the church comes from the Westminster Assembly, "God is a spirit, infinite, eternal and unchangeable, in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth." This definition, based on the whole biblical revelation, recalls that God showed Himself as benign, calling man to righteousness, service, good will. God sought through prophets, priests, and kings to make the nation righteous and human relations just and fair. God touches the lives of all men. To even the humblest—such as David, the shepherd boy; and Joseph, the youngest of many brothers; and to Moses, a murderer, hiding in the wilderness—to men like these he issues His calls to benevolence, to courage.

God, the Bible teaches, is the originator and architect of all things—"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." He made man in His own image and breathed into him His own "breath" or "spirit." Therefore there is a deep kinship between the Creator and His Creation.

One could go on giving additional and varied suggestions from philosophy and religion as to the nature of God. For our purposes let us say that God is the creative, persuasive power of perfect wisdom, order, truth, goodness, love, whose spirit is known in nature and in the soul of man.

It is pertinent that you have an adequate definition of God for yourself. I feel there is constant need for restating the unifying principle and power we call God, in terms of modern vocabulary and contemporary knowledge. If the definition, "God is the center of all values," is one that is sig-

nificant to you, hold on to it. Nietzsche uttered a valid call when at the end of the nineteenth century he cried for a "revaluation of all values."

It is well for each of us to do that for himself. Of all the values, none is more pivotal than that centered in the verbal symbol, "God." Find your own definition. Build and perhaps change it with the growing experiences that may be yours. Doing this makes the power and idea of God more vivid. It is as though you have a friend, whom you may have met only briefly in some distant place. You know of his existence. His congeniality with you was immediately felt. But as you correspond with him, make occasion to know him better, analyze the facets of his personality and character which are so appealing to you—your understanding of that friend increases. So it is with the concept of God.

You may never have a complete and forever-after satisfying understanding. But you will have enough to give cogency to the central and orienting power for your life. Beecher used the illustration of a man walking down the street and hearing from an open window bars of music. He might exclaim, "That is Beethoven; not all of him, but enough so that I can recognize him." In like manner man walks through life, seeing order, beauty, integrity, selflessness, kindness, heroism, and he affirms, "This is Divine, it is God. Not all of Him, but enough of Him for me to recognize, enough to make me know that the understanding of Him is important!"

For most of us the point when we have a deep and unwavering faith in God comes slowly, preceded by doubts and questions. If it is so for you, don't be disturbed by it. Surely don't turn from your quest simply because there are difficulties in the way. Dr. Fosdick has thoughtfully pointed out that many of the most inspiring believers in the history of the race found it hard at the beginning to believe in God.

But turning to the other side of the picture, looking at life without a concept of Providence, they found it harder still to disbelieve. It may be that your experience will approximate that of Tennyson's Arthur Hallam, who

> Fought his doubts and gathered strength.
> He would not make his judgement blind,
> He faced the spectres of his mind
> And laid them; thus he came at length
> To find a stronger faith his own.

The reason that this quest and the coming to a definitive faith in God is so important lies in the fact that without it we can never fully overcome loneliness. Nicholas Berdyaev is right when he says there is no absolute solitude. You never are alone. The memories and hopes, the heroes of the heart, friendships with your fellow men, great thoughts, these are ever with you in varying degrees in your aloneness. But without some basic conviction about God, the latent powers of our solitude will never be released or realized.

If you can take Albert Einstein's words for your own and say, I "know that what is impenetrable to us really exists, manifesting itself as the highest wisdom and the most radiant beauty," you are creating a firm center around which all else can take a harmonious place. There is a unity to transcend the disintegrations of the moment. You may be like a pilot, "flying blind" toward a destination that you cannot see. You send out a signal into the unseeable and there comes a signal in return. By the invisible impulses of conviction and the faith that register on the sensitive instrument of the soul, you are not lost. You know where you are. You know where you are going. And in the clouds and mists of infinity you are not fearful, for you are not alone. Again from the

philosopher Berdyaev: "only God is able to overcome loneliness."

I become weary of the critics of religion and faith who label it "an escape from life," who equate a trust in God with an "infantile regression" which assigns to "some Heavenly papa" protective qualities for man's own weakness and ignorance. I agree that there are erroneous, unhealthy, and unwarranted interpretations of the Judeo-Christian tradition. But this gives no justification for the rejection of faith any more than there is justification for throwing out the institutions of education because there is some inadequate teaching and some poor teachers. What folly it would be to discard the infant science of psychiatry because there have been erroneous theories in some quarters and some researchers of limited comprehension in the field.

In personal life, as in our social organization, in the Western world, it is insight into the nature of God and the faith engendered thereby that have given our most elevated standards and directions. More than this, our idea of God has nurtured many of our finest individual achievements and our most healthy integrations. Our own government is based on the vision that the rights of man come from God. Therefore they are "inalienable." Ben Moreell sees truly that the "social order derives its sanctions from the prevailing conception of the cosmic order."

When such insights growing out of the finest intuitions of the Judeo-Christian Graeco-Roman heritage are denied or forgotten, then both social anarchy and individual disintegration result. In a parable by Nietzsche a madman runs into a village crying, "Where is God? I shall tell you! We have killed him—you and I!—Whither do we move now? Away from all suns? Do we not fall incessantly? Backward,

sideward, forward, in all directions? Is there yet any up and down? Do we not err as through an infinite naught? Do we not feel the breath of empty space? Is not night and more night coming on all the while? God is dead."

When the concept of God was thwarted, as it was in our mid-twentieth century, what was the result? Treaties were valueless. A lie told enough times became a truth. Barbarism, massacre, tyranny, reduced life to a level lower than that in the jungle.

How callow, how ridiculous, the counsel of superficial observers who will look at that picture and try to say that religion causes weakness or that the idea of God is a vestigial hang-over from a superstitious age we have outgrown! Is there no distinction between right and wrong? Is there no difference between kindness and brutality? Are harmony and friction of equal value? Is there no difference between the adage, "Dog eat dog," as a rule for life and the insight, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself?"

Harmony, good will, right, kindness, are the words of God. By faith they are seen to be impregnated into the core of cosmic purpose, of which man is a part. To have that faith, to grow into it, to believe it above and beneath all things is the way to health. It leads to the deepest integration between man and his society. It is the strongest bulwark against an aimless, empty loneliness.

That faith does not weaken man. It gives him the resources to do the noblest thing he can do—stand upright, unafraid, alone. Again I would underline *the sense of God does not lead to wishful thinking or escape from life. It gives health and orientation with which any trial of life may be met like a man.* There come courage and integrity to "stick by one's guns." Jesus clearly rejected the poisonous attitude that makes of faith a gimmick to put responsibility on Providence

which man must shoulder himself. In the temptation in the desert the devil enticed Jesus to throw Himself from a mountain. God would protect Him, "He shall give his angels charge concerning thee; and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone." Mark it, this was a "temptation." It is perennially a temptation in religion. But a healthy alignment with God resists and rejects such shabby enticement to comfort and coddling. Jesus turned from it, to retain closer communion with the Divine Power which goes with one down the lonely mountain, step by hard step.

I think it would be well to look more closely at the ways in which the Presence of God assuages loneliness and elevates life. Also, it might prove helpful to review some of the ways by which man becomes aware of God in his aloneness.

For one thing, the concept that we are in a moral world where there is pain and tragedy, but where there is also a creative purpose calling man to master the pain and the tragedy, is one that makes sense. It lines up with the observations of reason. It brings the serenity-producing conviction that all things, the good and bad, pleasant and difficult, are claimed and transmuted by God to some kind of foreseeable good. More than this, it makes God's Presence close in our hardship and suffering.

The words of Carl Sandburg's mother, in a letter to him, radiate this strong serenity: "The larger wisdom behind the veil is yet strong and able to uplift the crushed—crushed I am many times, but not to death. The apron of silence is with me."

In my personal experience I have found the times of sorrow occasions when the sense of God was most real. There was a deepening of the conviction that only with God in

the picture could loss, tragedy, sorrow have any significance. My mother was a lovely Christian. Her faith in God radiates in letters written to my father during their courtship. It was, outside her love of music, the dominant trait by which I remember her. She died just before my adolescence. I had a vague but comforting sense then that what she believed was true: God would take care of her. There wasn't any sense to life at all unless her lovely spirit and her wonderful gift of song were used somewhere where the Spirit dwelt and where music was born. And there *was* sense to life! She believed it. I felt it.

Years later our eight-year-old daughter died after a lingering bout with cancer. Later still our oldest son was accidentally killed. At those times the ultimate questions were asked as they had been in the theological classroom and the abstract study. There was nothing theoretical or abstract about the questions now. There could be nothing academic to the answers one had to have. The only answer that made sense was that amid all the mysteries and enigmas of life, one could see a purpose and a reason, or at least a *use* for everything that existed and occurred. While in sorrow one could not say what the reason or use of the specific tragedy might be; the only acceptable thing one could say was, "Here, too, there is a purpose, which I do not understand, but which I know must be there." An old friend said at this time, "You cannot but be bound more closely to the presence of eternity which we call God." I found it so. A ministerial colleague sat by our fire and quietly, from memory, spoke words from the Bible, "deep calleth unto deep," "in all their affliction He was afflicted," "all things work together for good," "underneath are the everlasting arms." Those concepts brought a vivid dimension of significance to what would have been pitiable and disintegrating hours.

The awareness of a presence and purpose that claimed such experience for good was a warm reality. Intellectually it seemed at those times and it appears to me now as the soundest realism.

I almost hesitate to use a tender illustration because it may seem overly sentimental. I tell it to you because, in my judgment, it is just the opposite—a cogent analogy of the significance of God in our hours of hardship and our times of tragedy. The story concerns a little girl who had fallen and cut her head. It was necessary for the physician to stitch the wound. An anaesthetic was inadvisable. The doctor spoke to the child and asked her if she would let him stick her with a needle so that her head would get well. She was afraid but said she thought she could stand it if her father could be with her. The father, who felt more badly than the little girl herself, took her on his lap and held her close. Hiding his own distress, he spoke lovingly and encouragingly as the stitches were taken. The little girl could not restrain the tears at the pain. But she felt her father's enfolding arms hold her even more tightly until the ordeal was over.

The Bible is affirming something as simple and yet as ultimately relevant as that to you and me. That which we call God is like unto a father, who may not be able to keep all the hardships from us but who, when we suffer, is afflicted with us. He is perhaps then closer than at any other time. His love and strength reach out to hold us. His Presence, bringing the sense of eternal value, enables us to "transcend" (to use the philosophical term) the chaos of circumstance. (And to use a word from psychology) we grow into a higher "integration."

I believe a similar experience can be yours if you'll take the pains to seek it at any time of difficulty. Hard times are

lonesome times. The answers to our dilemmas, the strength for our downfalls, the perspective needed to surmount our sorrows, must come from that aloneness. And the most potent force and reality for the resolution of our difficulty in that aloneness come from a deepening awareness of God's presence.

Cultivating the Presence of God in your aloneness not only gives understanding of difficulty; it also enables you to look on all of life with greater perspective, sounder wisdom.

I am sure you believe that the life of Jesus was one of the most balanced, wise, and well-ordered lives ever lived. He is unsurpassed in ability to summarize principles so they are clear and appealing. His parables enchant the centuries. His crystal insights and commands are the guideposts for every man who would find life abundant. The secret of His insights and broad understandings come from His continual awareness of God's presence. These are His words: "If I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me"; again, ". . . the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him"; and yet again, ". . . Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone; and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me."

In these statements from Him, notice: first, judgment, then action, and finally the capacity to deal with solitary pain, are all made more successful because of God's Presence. For Jesus the Presence of God was a constant cultivation. This led to the breadth, courage, and perception that hold the admiration of the ages.

Don't think this experience was to be retained between

the pages of a sacred book completed nineteen hundred years ago. It is an experience just as available and perhaps even more valid for the Atomic Age. It's an experience that all of us both need and can have.

A friend reported that in a recent television program Gail Storm said she and her husband had a five-point program by which they tried to live. The items in the scale were put in this order: 1. Spiritual, 2. Mental, 3. Physical, 4. Material, and 5. Social. Doesn't that make sense? The spiritual orientation of our lives colors everything else. Put it at the end of the list or leave it out altogether and "you won't know where you're at." You lack the perspective to see material, social, physical matters in their right proportion.

To save yourself from this, put first emphasis on the spiritual side of life. The primary way to make this emphasis is by letting God into your life. A person whose life is wonderfully balanced and happy wrote me, "To me the most important thing is the first commandment. [Thou shalt have no other gods before thee.] To understand that first—to realize that God is the Divine source of all things and to acknowledge Him and praise Him—is the all-important matter. When that is done all things material become so secondary that one doesn't worry about acquisition or possession—one is freed from undue concern over material things. One learns that God, if we have no other 'gods' before Him, will provide every material need *when* it is needed."

To look with objectivity on the events about us there has to be a subjective standard. We need an inner yardstick by which our judgments and evaluations can be made with confidence. The need is met as, in aloneness, we come to know that we are not alone. The presence of what is everlastingly right and good and loving has enfolded our deepest consciousness with the wisdom these alone can bring.

The sense of God's Presence gives you the feeling of an overarching sense of justice in the affairs of men. And you know a calm that cannot be disturbed by the seeming success of the calloused, the selfish, the cruel. In a letter to his son Heine counseled him to seek the wisdom that "grants the fool his right to folly, and is tolerant of intolerance in others." That strong, restrained attitude will come with ease to the man and the woman to whom God is close—the God of Justice who stands within the shadows keeping watch over His own even when the world seems to put truth on the scaffold.

It is reported that just before his duel with Alexander Hamilton, Aaron Burr sat alone in his library at Richmond Hill, New York. A clue as to his thoughts then is left in a letter he wrote to his daughter. It contains this sentence, "Some very wise man has said, 'O Fools who think it solitude to be alone.' " I think we can assume that in those last lonely moments Aaron Burr knew that victory in killing Hamilton would mean defeat. There was an invisible law of justice that men could not break. Those who tried broke themselves against it.

Such an awareness of the right can be disturbing at moments of aloneness, as it was for Burr. But cultivating the awareness with regularity might have saved Burr from making the rash challenge. For you and me, to feel the presence and power of that mysterious spirit which sees that right and righteousness always win gives a serene confidence. More than that, it grants us an assurance that as we make our daily decisions and live our lives by the rule of "the Right and the Fair" we need not fear man, time, or circumstance.

A man does not seek God's Presence without coming closer to his fellow men. Let your mind and heart be made aware

of the creative power that moves through all life, and you will have a sense of closeness to all men. Know in your heart that God loves universally, and the attitude toward your unpleasant neighbor will be more controlled. At the beginning of the day ask Divine care over the relationships between yourself and all others you will meet. In the course of the fast-fleeting hours, let the Presence of that harmony that seeks to diminish frictions between men come again into your consciousness, and the day's end is bound to be more fruitful.

One writer, dealing with the subject, *The Spur of Loneliness,* points out that one cannot seek the Divine Presence without being aware of ways he can serve his fellow men. "We already know someone who needs a heartening letter, a friendly visit, a lift into town. All around us are people who are ill, people who are troubled, people who are bereaved, people who are lonely. Some of them are crotchety and unpleasant and ungrateful. 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.' "

Your sense of God and the subsequent relating of yourself to others gives a cosmic significance to your attitudes and acts. There is a meaning, a purpose, to your intentions which you never had before. You are not just doing your aimless work. You are doing God's work too. Through you His love and wisdom and truth is imparted into the lives of others and so into the unending stream of time.

The Presence of God in our aloneness opens the doors to the health-giving experience of forgiveness. Jesus gave as the essence of all the commandments, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and mind and strength and soul." If that is made a primary orientation of your life, there is

provided an occasion when your faults are seen more clearly and keenly. To stand in the presence of Perfect Love is to be aware of the imperfections of our own spirit of love toward others. It is in the presence of that profound love that our own failures and sins can be cleansed, forgiven. We do not achieve that health by not daring to face our inadequacies. We cannot get it completely from human counselors or confessors. The best they can do is to lead us to God's forgiveness.

One of Shakespeare's greatest dramas, *Macbeth,* dissects human sin and fear. In the later portion of the play Lady Macbeth, inwardly tortured with remorse at the murder in which she participated, begins to walk in her sleep. The scene where she wanders in the dead of night endlessly scrubbing her hands, hands that will not come clean, puts a hush over the audience. Her maid, disturbed by her behavior, calls a physician who watches and listens as, in her sleepwalking, she cries, ". . . all the perfume of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand." The physician in the shadows says, "More needs she the Divine than the physician. God, God, forgive us all."

You see the deepest isolation in Lady Macbeth was from herself. She could not compartmentalize life—wrong actions in one area and an inner sense of values in another. The resolution, if it could come at all, would not be from men. It must be a confrontation with the Infinite in her aloneness. Repentance, confession, penitence, and a renewed commitment to the everlasting mercy, as the physician truly saw, was the only way. The tragedy of Lady Macbeth was that she missed the way. God's Presence was not let in.

What we have been seeing should lead us to say that the Presence of God in our aloneness is the most powerful factor

for directing and fulfilling our life. In the Bible, as men of various capacities sought God, they were restored, strengthened, and directed in various ways to do unique work and to find satisfaction. To the Prophets, awareness of God gave insight into the direction the nation should move. To some it inspired the haunting beauty of the Psalms. Often it elevated and sharpened all human faculties. It evidenced itself in greater enthusiasm, new courage, liberty and skill of speech, keen insight into human dilemmas, sound judgment of human character, business aptitude, and serenity with which to meet suffering and sorrow.

Years ago I knew a half-breed guide on the Canadian border. He signed his name with an X. Somewhere in his background he had been exposed to the idea that God made all things and that man's happiness came in dedicating his life to Him. That exposure made an indelible image in his heart. Each morning he said a prayer something like this: "God, help me have good day fishing. Help me be good man, for Jesus. Amen."

One day, fishermen, whom he had guided, twitted him about his prayer. "Well, Joe, your prayin' didn't pay off today. Look, only one measly little fish."

"You wrong, friend. It pay. Maybe no fish. But me no mad like you." Then came a toothless smile that wrinkled his red-brown parchment face, "The trees still tall. The water clear. The sun still in sky. No fish today mean more for catch tomorrow. God, He good. He give you, me, good day."

As with old Joe, the committing of your days to God, the sensing of His Presence in your aloneness, will make for you a good day—on the inside—no matter what happens.

How does a man achieve this sense of God's presence? Reason and thinking bring many a person to this reality.

What is my life purpose? From where did I come? What is truly significant and abiding? What is it that is of highest value? How does man know? What is it that separates man from the rest of nature? Why is this? How did it come into being? Is there any observable purpose in history?

Pondering such questions can lead you to the sense of a Divine Purpose that runs through all creation, all history, and which becomes a reality in your solitude. It was so for a college friend of mine whose life has been devoted to science. His experience runs like this:

"Up to World War II my complete absorption was in research in the physical sciences. The war simply deepened what feeling I'd had, namely that there wasn't much reason or order to existence that warranted any kind of faith except in cause and effect. I had time during those years to do some thinking I'd never done before. Two facts started my analysis. One was a strong inner sense in me that Hitlerism was doomed because it was just plain wrong. The other was an experience at the front. Two soldiers, against heavy fire, wiped out a machine-gun nest. One was wounded. The retreat was extremely hazardous. Yet his companion carried him in. In the barracks someone commended him. He sharply replied, 'What in the hell are we here for, in this loused-up world, if it isn't to help someone when they need it?' "

My friend continued, "I had time to ask myself where the sense of right I had within came from. What makes someone do a good, a selfless thing? And what makes the rest of us recognize and honor it as nobility? I could see cause and effect in all my studies and experiments. Was there a prime cause? If so, what was its nature? My thinking led me to what for me was an inescapable conclusion—there is a force men call 'God.' I achieved and still possess a reverence for the source of what I see as a sense of right and order and

goodness and kindness. There has to be a cause for these effects. The only acceptable and logical one for me is in the symbol 'God.' My thinking has led me to 'feel' God as a power."

A vast number of people find the Presence of God in the church. There, hallowed associations—the lifting up of great memories in symbolic stone and glass and wood, the placing of the Bible in an honored place, the cross with its reminder of the life of Christ—cause many individuals to feel the timelessness, the glory, the love of God.

You might not expect a Wall Street broker to give testimony as to how he seeks God's presence. Yet one of my oldest and dearest friends, Walker Gentry Buckner, who has achieved success in the financial field, does just that. He writes:

"I believe that I am never alone if I am willing to seek God. If I am willing to take the initiative and seek God either through the reading of inspirational works or stopping in at a church and reading the prayerbook or hymns each day, before I do anything else, I am quite successful in avoiding the negative phases of life. I do not have any superstition about churches as a limited area where there is an intensified presence of God. However, I feel that the church is an organization and building where, in the divine plan of things, God reveals himself to mankind. I cannot explain why this is so, nor can I explain why I believe it. However, I cannot explain why the grass is green nor can I explain gravity or innumerable things that I accept daily as a fact even though I cannot explain them.

"I have in my lifetime turned to important people, friends, facts, logic, and many other devices for help. All have been unsatisfactory. When I have turned daily to God to find the

inspiration to carry me through the day, then I have found fulfillment and satisfaction.

"Some of my friends say that timing is everything. I think that if we do not have the time to turn to God we will find our timing poor, and that we will rush our shots and things will not work out, whereas if we will seek God we will find all the satisfaction that we are seeking.

"When my days become so busy that I do not have time to pray nor stop by the church and seek God, I know that all is not well and that the very things that I am chasing will elude me."

The communion with nature is a means for coming into the Presence of God. We easily fall prey to the idea of looking on the natural, material world only commercially, scientifically, or as offering mechanical problems to be solved. The sense of enchantment with the beauty and harmony revealed there can be passed by. Conscious of the loss that comes in this failure, Wordsworth wrote:

> The world is too much with us; late and soon,
> Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:
> Little we see in Nature that is ours;
> We have given our hearts away, sordid boon!

You need not be in the wilderness to change the trend. A woman tells me: "I never have a lonesome feeling if there is a flower in my room. I have come to know flowers as living creatures. They are as companionable as a friend. Part of the mysterious and wonderful creation, they can speak to me. They seem a part of what I am or am meant to be." Such musings can bring one into closer unity with nature and the power that created it and you too.

The word "musings" is important. No hurried, crisp, or

noisy attitude can bring the sense of God. But quietness, rumination, aloneness can. Baron Friedrich von Hugel affirms that a quarter-hour a day given to reading "has been one of the greatest sustenances and sources of calm for my life." Then he describes the technique of his reading:

"Of course, such 'reading' is hardly reading in the ordinary sense of the word at all. As well could you call—a very slowly dissolving lozenge melting imperceptibly in your mouth 'eating.' Such reading, is, of course, meant as directly as possible to feed the heart, to fortify the will—to put these into contact with God—thus, by the book, to get away from the book to the realities it suggests—the longer the better."

The same method, applied to the savoring of the natural world, can calm and enlarge your soul. If in place of "book" you put the word "nature" and if in place of "reading" you use the word, "musing," "enchantment," or "wonder," you have a helpful method to read the mysteries of God's creation and so to stand in the Presence of the reality which the creation suggests—God Himself.

The Bible is an inexhaustible source of God's Presence. Read it slowly. Let the heart sip it like some rare nectar. Put it in your lap when it suggests some profound thought, and let your mind, with gentle concentration, contemplate it. In aloneness, give the spirit behind the words a chance to "find you." The Bible can. A regular reading of its words, quietly and thoughtfully, brings the presence, giving serenity to your heart and meaning to your tasks.

I have suggested earlier that in sorrow or difficulty the Presence of God can be especially real. Samuel Taylor Coleridge on his death bed wrote a letter to a godson of his, in which is the personal affirmation:

". . . for the last three or four years [I] have, with few and brief intervals, been confined to a sickroom, and at this moment in great weakness and heaviness write from a sick-bed, hopeless of a recovery, yet without prospect of a speedy removal; and I, thus on the very brink of the grave, solemnly bear witness to you that the Almighty Redeemer, most gracious in His promises to them that truly seek Him, is faithful to perform what he hath promised, and has preserved under all my pains and infirmities, the inward peace that passeth all understanding. . . ."

Such peace can be yours. At such a troublesome time you start on the road toward it if you consider in your aloneness the ways to overcome your difficulty or sorrow. Don't bog down at the first with the question: Why should this happen to me? You may wish to dwell with that question later. But make the first questions: How can I learn from this tragedy? What resources can I find to meet it with dignity and courage? What and where is the Power to see it through? You can, following the trail of these thoughts, come to the deep realization of God. "I will not leave you comfortless." "Ask and ye shall receive; knock and it shall be opened unto you." "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." "Man's extremity is God's opportunity."

I find help in knowing the Presence of God by reading some of the treasured prayers of the ages, by remembering people in all walks of life to whom God was the deepest reality, and through the biographies of the saints and heroes of the centuries. Contact with them leaves its wholesome influence on you. Louise Dickenson Rich testifies, "God is too great for my finite mind to encompass. But I have seen His visage reflected in the faces of ordinary men and women who have helped me." You have seen that too, not only in

the spirit of a Saint Francis of whom it was said, "He ran away to God like other boys might run away to sea." You saw God in the tender eyes, the wise and loving words of counsel, the generous and unexpected acts of the men and women who hallowed your childhood and who bless your maturity. You cultivate His Presence in remembering such godly people and by associating with such in your life today.

A parishioner in the congregation to which I minister recently went through a particularly trying experience. Certain individuals on whom she might have called for help were away. She was in a strange and new community. She says, "There just didn't seem to be any place to turn. I was forced to look straight at God. Now I know that is the only way to win battles—there is no place to run. God is the only One who can give us strength and if we aren't ready to receive it from Him we can't get it from anyone else."

Our love, our hope, our praise, our prayer, our wonderment, our trust, our spiritual seeking and earnest thinking, brings Him near—and He goes with us along the way that life calls us to follow.

Can you see God? Not in the physical sense that you look on the face of one deeply loved. But, as the presence of that loved one may be a living force in your heart, though continents may separate you, so God's spirit may be as close as your breathing. You may not "see" Him, but you "know" Him and He speaks to your solitude—in the pine tree that raises proud arms to the sky, yet shelters a songbird's nest; in the laughter of a child; in a gentle word spoken by someone in a crowded subway; in a morning-glory that opens its petals to the dawn; in knotted hands that fold in reverence and lips that softly pray in a country church: "Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name . . ."

When the day begins and your mind lifts the hours ahead to Him, His presence comes. In the midday He speaks through the words of wisdom and conciliation uttered at the conference table. When you pause to plead for patience and courage, at the nerve-racking hours, He can be the bearer of those gifts to you. As evening comes and the family gathers and the table is spread, He is there in the impulse of humility, the word of gratitude.

And when the sun dies out of the sky, and the mantle of night seeks to wrap you with the blessing of sleep, His presence is there to restore the body and the soul.

Indeed, you are never alone.

Chapter 7

The Companionship of Christ

It is reported that when Joan of Arc was chained to the stake and the fires of her martyrdom were lit, she cried out for a cross. A humble person, we have been told, lashed two sticks together and handed her the rude replica of Calvary. As she pressed it to her breast, it appeared to be an antidote to the cruelty of the flames. A calm recognition was in her eyes, reflecting a deep comfort that had come into her soul.

The cross was tangible. Possibly the tactile touch deepened associations with Him whom it symbolized. He came closer perhaps, communicating to the Maid of Orléans the courage and trust that was His when He went to His own crucifixion.

For some people the idea of God is abstract and difficult to comprehend. There is hardship in cultivating the sense of the Divine Presence. Yet the experience of feeling the closeness of Christ can be very real and ever-present. This is so, however, only as the effort is made to cultivate companionship with Him.

One of the distinct features of Jesus and of the religion He founded lies in the assurance of His companionship and in the pivotal importance put on friendship with Him. William Lindsay Gresham tells of his seeking for freedom from loneliness. He affirms that the only place he finds it is in the Jesus of Christianity. "If we read the Gospels with an honest and open mind, we will come at last to experience the truth of the great promise, the most joyous words ever uttered on this planet: 'Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.' "

It is clear from the record that friendship, personal loyalty, was a prime desire of Jesus. True, He uttered clear ethical commands that come ringing down the years, "Do unto others . . . ," "Whosoever shall compel thee to go one mile, go with him twain," and many others.

He advised against action that did not consider the consequences or count the cost. Balance and response to responsibility were admonitions of His: "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's." Put God first and everything else will fall into its rightful place, He urged. He pointed out the error of caustic judgment of one's fellow men—"Let him that is without sin cast the first stone."

True, too, one facet of His life marks Him as a healer of physical, mental, and psychosomatic ills of men. He responded with the tenderest sympathy to the leper, the blind, the crippled, the demented; and He brought to bear on their illness the resources of healing which were His unique gifts. His life story is filled with "miracles" of healing. In the retelling of the loved story, by one who is devoted to Him, each act becomes a beautiful part of His dedicated life.

But the heart of Jesus' ministry and genius is not in His role as a teacher, sage, or healer. His most direct and poignant

appeal was not to believe or think or act. The first and last thing He asked for was acceptance as a friend—to love Him. "Follow me," "Come unto me," were among His first appeals. At the end of His life, when He obviously was testing the depth of Peter's feeling and thought, He did not say, "Peter can you review for me the main principles I have tried to teach?" Neither did He ask, "Peter, do you think you can carry on the healing ministry you have seen me perform? I'm leaving a heavy responsibility on your shoulders. Do you feel adequate to it, remembering all the techniques I have demonstrated for keeping close to God and dealing with your fellow men?"

No, those were not the questions. It was deeper, more primary, more personal, more intimate: "Peter, lovest thou me?" In this instance, as with others in the biography, the first attraction was not to be to His beliefs or thoughts or works, but to Himself.

As you read the record in the twentieth century you will find it as vivid and personal for you as it was for Peter. Behind the stirring commands, the noble ethics, the heroic action, is the man Himself, seeking other men to have kinship with Him. He asks for that mutual affection and concern, that sharing of mutual aspirations, which men know as friendship. From the New Testament there reaches out a radiant, confident, loving life, seeking the allegiance and friendship of other men who will "abide in my love."

It appears to me that one of our deepest needs is the sense of relatedness, of companionship. I feel too that in the cultivation of Christ's companionship the need is fulfilled in perhaps the most satisfying way. It has been told that Rupert Brooke, on sailing from Liverpool to New York, was shrouded in sadness as he watched farewells at the dock. Everyone

seemed to have someone embracing or waving a fond good-by except himself. The poet made a quick deal with a lad on the wharf. For a bit of change, dirty face smiling, and arms wildly waving, the boy gave an enthusiastic farewell to the lonesome passenger till the vessel disappeared on the horizon.

I have been told that from the psychological standpoint the desire to "merge" or "submerge" our personality in that of another may indicate a tendency to neuroticism. The normal person may not desire complete domination or dilution of himself. Yet the need for relationship is both healthy and strong. You may not wish for your life to be completely circumscribed by the orbit of another person. But for the periphery of your life to be "linked" or united with others is a basic need. We are alone. And yet the grandeur and potential of our aloneness is most fully appreciated if there is a relatedness to another self or selves.

Queen Victoria is reported as having whispered poignantly after the death of her husband, "There is no one left to call me Victoria." Before her husband's death she was alone. But in terms of the definitions we are making in this volume, she now stood on the path of lonesomeness. A relationship that kept her from feeling completely alone was broken.

You constantly find small strands of support in even the most casual encounter with other people. The man who mows your lawn can provide a feeling of relationship. He helps you. Your compensation is helpful to him. With old and trusted friends the ties are stronger and so of greater sustenance to you, both when you are in their society and when you are in solitude. Then with a very few, perhaps only one, there is an especially important linking. It's true that, as Lorado Taft portrays in his marble composition, "The Solitude of the Soul," there may never be a complete oneness. You stand in your aloneness, as does the other in his or her

aloneness. Yet there are shared experiences, mutual beliefs, aspirations and hopes, common memories, that bind you to each other. The area of the binding together may be small. It may in your aloneness make you aware of the vast area of your differences. And yet that aspect of togetherness, which causes inner gladness when another voice calls your name, is a powerful factor in the integration of your life.

To build the strands of friendship, to keep them in repair, to increase the number of them, is the way to health. But see the danger, too, if you try to make of those links of association an escape from your aloneness or seek to use them as substitutes for growth in your solitude.

The truth of life is that ties are broken. Like fickle winds and falling twigs that tear the strands of the spider's web, so time and circumstance sever the relationships we have with others.

But there is one strand of relationship that this world cannot break. It is one of companionship with Christ. Across the centuries men and women have cultivated the "presence of the Unseen Friend" and found in that companionship the deepest support of their aloneness. Your friends of the weeks or years may prove faithless. Acquaintances, with whom there were minor links of mutual support, may change. The one to whom one's heart is knotted may die. But the spiritual companionship of the soul with Jesus remains and can even grow closer through every vicissitude. It is a source of peace and dignity to conquer loneliness.

In the catalogue of the varieties of religious experience this one of the closeness of Jesus is most fruitful for your consideration. It is recorded vividly in the experience of Paul. He was a zealous extrovert. He was committed with passionate enthusiasm to stamping out the heresy of Christianity. It may well be that the early portion of his biography reveals the

fact of his inner inadequacy. External work prevented him from internal evaluation. All his actions may have been an attempt to escape from his aloneness.

This is the case until he is seen making the solitary journey from Jerusalem to Damascus. On that lonesome road the Bible tells us that Christ appeared to Paul, demanding, "Why persecutest thou me?" It was a question Paul had avoided asking. In honestly facing up to a possible answer, he had to look into his own emptiness. He saw not only the fruitlessness of all his violent action but, more poignant still, the hollowness of an inner life that had no real core of conviction. He was with people all the time and yet companionships with them were all on the surface. He had not permitted any real relationship with his own self.

The presence of Christ through the rest of Paul's years was the orienting factor for one of the most influential lives lived. This experience of Paul's is described in different words down through the ages, but all the words boil down to one simple testimony: There is a compelling companionship with Christ which is beneath and above the waves of circumstance. It provides the individual with a sense of relationship and direction for aloneness. It overcomes aimlessness and loneliness.

In our own time Jack Wyrtzen, director of the Word of Life Fellowship, describes this experience:

"During the first nineteen years of my life I often was lonely and discouraged. I wondered what life was all about, what made us tick, what was the answer to the riddle of life, where we came from and where we were going. Then, at the age of nineteen, while in the United States Army, my buddy introduced me to Jesus Christ and showed me how I could be born again. He showed me that if I took Christ as Saviour, I would no longer be lonely, despondent, discouraged, but

that I would find in Christ complete satisfaction. One night, by my bedside, I acknowledged the fact that I was a sinner, that I believed that Jesus Christ died on the cross of Calvary and then arose from the grave, and I invited Him—the Son of God—to come into my heart. Ever since then, I have realized the presence of the Lord. . . . That is why I am no longer lonely."

Mr. Wyrtzen's affirmation is a testimony of Jesus' own promise, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." The gospel hymn writer put this widely known experience in the words:

> On life's pathway I am never lonely,
> My Lord is with me, my Lord divine;
> Ever-present Guide, I trust Him only,
> No longer lonely, for He is mine.
> No longer lonely, no longer lonely,
> For Jesus is the Friend of friends to me.

No other faith, as I see it, so faces the problem of human solitude. None offers a sounder fruition than that to be found in the companionship of Christ. Judaism seeks life's fulfillment by the keeping of a covenant with God. Confucianism's wisdom is to follow the laws of common sense and achieve one's place by agreeable relationships with other human beings. Buddhism believes the only way is in the rejection of existence. Mohammedanism, as I understand it, leads to a loss of selfhood in the acquiescent acceptance of what is, and in the expulsion of personal identity in transcending passions. Christianity, in contrast, accepts what man is clearly, recognizes that there is good within him, and offers a way and inspiration to the fulfillment of the individual in the ever-present love and leadership of Jesus, who goes with man as his Friend.

It is true that we are molded and modeled in large degree by the experiences we have gone through, by the individuals whose lives have touched ours. To permit a close tie with the wise, courageous, loving life that is lived by Jesus is to expose our souls to a molding into that wisdom and courage and love. You may not be conscious of the presence of Jesus and may even say you are repelled by the idea of companionship with Him. Yet His influence is constantly about you in every humane institution in your town: the hospital, the church, the Y.M.C.A., the Salvation Army, the social service agencies, the movements to uplift and provide opportunity for the mentally ill, the crippled, underprivileged children, and many others. At the origin of these causes can be traced the benign power of Him who said, "Inasmuch as ye do it unto the least of these my brethren . . ." These are the lengthening shadows of His life, of His presence. You are never alone when there are such constant external reminders of the influence of Jesus and when, too, there is a responding to kindness and service and selflessness that wells up in your own heart. He is present both in the "seen" works and in the "unseen" kinship which responds to those works.

I feel it important for us to understand that in companionship with Christ we get and keep a real faith in man. As I see it, the appeal of modern theories for a collective society, where the individual is merged in the mass and where responsibility for personal and corporate life is put in the state, are evidence of a weakening faith in man. The argument runs that the individual is incapable of personal fulfillment on his own. He has proved himself unable to create an ordered and fair self-government. His uniqueness must be submerged in society, for the best interests both of himself and the larger group.

In your personal observation you can see so much that seems to support these conclusions. You see selfishness and lack of consideration for one's fellows. If you do not see it in your neighborhood, the newspapers will tell you of the high rate of delinquency in the larger neighborhood of which you are a part. Parents do not provide guidance and love for children. Marriages break up because of individuals who will not fulfill a contract, who are more concerned with immediate satisfactions than with the long-term fulfillments of patience, adjustment, and loving compromise. Indeed, it is an easy thing to let your mind and heart become disillusioned with the most powerful idea behind the development of Western civilization—the idea of the dignity and capability of man.

Where is this conviction renewed? For me it is in the mind and spirit of Jesus Christ. He has faith in man. He lives that faith as He plays with children and honors womanhood, as He takes time to call out the integrity in Zaccheus. He demonstrates that faith as He is willing to trust the teaching He has won from years of solitary questing, to men whose faults He knows, men like Peter and James and Thomas. Surely Jesus looks beyond the obvious frailties of men to see their possible strength, their hidden glory. For Him this is the most significant thing about man. Not what he is. But rather his vast potential—what he may become.

As you cannot be friendly with an individual who, say, has an enthusiasm for traveling without that zest affecting you, so you cannot come close to the mind and spirit of Jesus without having a strong renewal of faith in yourself and in your fellow men.

A faith in the goodness of man is needed in our world, as it is needed in our own hearts and minds, one by one. Believe with Jesus that man is a soul as well as a body. Let His faith be yours that man is not a biological or economic unit,

but that he is hopes and dreams and possibilities—the infinite in the finite. Be convinced, as was Jesus, that man must have freedom to reach his potential, and that truth and love would progressively free him—believe that and you can have no jaded feeling regarding yourself. You will also be possessed of the fire and direction that have built the best in our heritage of Western civilization. Truly, that faith needs firm believers and followers in our time. Believe it and you will find that the spirit of Christ is close, and with Him are the heroes and martyrs who went to the arena or the stake without fear, for they knew they were not alone.

When the spirit of Jesus comes close to a man's life, he is inspired to find that inner peace which the world cannot give and which it cannot take away. Dr. Leslie D. Weatherhead in his volume, *The Transforming Friendship,* points out the keen responsiveness of Jesus to human need. Yet, amid the vast work he did, Jesus never gave the impression of being busy or rushed or worried. ". . . there was a poise of spirit, a quiet heart, an inward peace. He was *'gathered into Himself.'"* I have used italics on the last phrase to emphasize a key characteristic of the Master. Says Dr. Weatherhead, "To all folk He was the same kindly, sympathetic Friend. . . . He was the personification of the friendliness of God." Accept that friendship and you are drawn into the orbit of the unclouded faith, the balance of action and solitude that was His.

But now more specifically, how can we know this friendship? What are the ways men have found whereby they know the companionship of Christ and so can say, "I am never alone"?

The Bible attests, and experience verifies, that sincere and

humble welcoming of His Presence into our lives brings Him near. A few years ago I stood in St. Paul's Cathedral in London, looking at the copy of the world-famous painting inspired by the text, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him." You know that painting. It shows Christ, standing at the door of a man's soul, gently knocking. But the door has no latch or knob on the outside. It can only be opened from within.

The church was silent and empty at the hour when I saw that painting. The sun from a side window lighted it in bright contrast to the semidarkness of the great nave. It seemed to me that the way the picture was highlighted expressed symbolically an abiding and most significant element in Christianity. Its uniqueness is not in size and grandeur. Not in the number of devotees. Not in cathedrals which their corporate loyalties may erect. Not even in the far-flung works of mercy which their common stewardship makes possible. It is the eternal spirit of Jesus standing at the door of a man's soul, tenderly offering His friendship. As he opens the door with trust and humility he knows a companionship which even death cannot break.

Some find the presence of Christ in honest, thoughtful seeking with like-minded individuals. Jesus promised that when two or three were gathered together in His name He would be there in the midst of them. An experience where this occurred is recorded in the New Testament. It was on the Sunday morning following the Crucifixion. Two of the disciples were going down from Jerusalem to Emmaus. Behind them were the brutal memories of Friday—the horror of the Master's suffering and death. Then had come, with its stunned and empty silence, Saturday. What would they now do, these

men who had left all to follow the Master? Each was wrapped close in the mantle of his troubled thoughts. "What now can I believe? The most superb life ever lived, extinguished by the ignorant and fearful. Where shall I go and what shall I do?" So the two disciples must have individually thought as the sun rose above the hills of Moab, to light their way on the road to Emmaus.

As they continued their journey they began to talk to each other. The Gospel of Luke says, "While they communed together and reasoned together, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them." They shared with each other their private thoughts. As they did that their solitariness merged into a togetherness. From their black and troubled moods they began a mutual evaluation and judgment.

Perhaps one of them said, "I believe that if ever we ought to show the calm and courage the Master tried to give us, now must be the time." The companion could well have replied, "Yes, I'm sure that is right. And this thought occurs to me, that because we were so close to Him, we ought to take some initiative in seeing that all we learned from Him is passed on to others. Surely we do an injustice to Him if we can't live daily with some of the courage and trust we saw Him show at His hour of death."

So they likely talked, and as they *"communed together and reasoned,* Jesus himself drew near and went with them." Many a biblical student sees this scene and experience as epitomizing the purpose of God. He seeks man. It is as though the Eternal Spirit has here found a vehicle through which His concern may reach out and find companionship with man. It is as though Providence is saying, "This is what I have been seeking to do through the centuries. This is how I want to come near and go with you—down the plainest road, leading to the simplest village, to the humblest homes and

hearts. My spirit, through the gracious life of Christ, when there is togetherness between men can now draw near and go with them in a living companionship."

A friend reported to me an experience in a small seminar of four students and a teacher in a postgraduate course dealing with advanced problems in the philosophy of religion. Toward the end of the course their reports turned from what others had written on the subject to what the individual students personally felt and needed in the way of religious conviction. One of those present reported:

"I often wondered what gave the dynamic to the tiny bands of Christians in the first century. They were persecuted, we know. Probably they 'worshiped' or, more accurately, came together to 'talk about' and 'remember' Jesus, in private homes. There must have been a very vivid sense of His presence else they would not have made so much of the 'risen and living Christ,' in the early preaching and teaching.

"I think I know now something of their experience, because of the one we had in that seminar. As the members of that little group talked intimately and honestly about their own faith there was established a relationship with each other we hadn't had all year. Not only on the level of intelligence, but on the deeper stratum of affection, there was a togetherness which we knew. We realized we were the same in needing assurance as to the meaning and purpose of life. In the glow of our kinship there seemed to be a brighter light of comprehension and trust which we felt but couldn't explain.

"As we left the class our professor said, 'This may make you want to ask the question as to just when and where is the Emmaus road recorded in the Bible? It might be well also to recall a lovely promise, 'When two or three are gathered together—I am there.' "

In a prayer meeting, at a time of sorrow or calamity when

sincere seekers probe together for the truth, or in an intimate sharing of needs and trusts with a close friend, the doors are often opened for the Companionship of Christ.

Then, of course, friendship is furthered only if effort is made to understand that friend. There is no companionship unless interest in the companion has developed and grown. You come to friendship with Jesus by reading His words, learning of His life. One of the fine scholarly historians of a past generation used to speak of individuals dead for centuries as "my friends." So they were; he knew their lives, he had lived with them. Their thoughts and convictions had become his. In truth they were closer and more companionable than ninety-five per cent of the people he passed on the street.

It can be like that in a companionship with Christ. Take time to let His thoughts speak to you. Learn of His patience, lovingness, wisdom, till you can hear His laughter and see His great figure entering a village to leave there the benediction of His presence. As His principles and faith become yours, you find the sources of His peace and courage. He comes close to you. You find Him.

Then the use of some tangible symbol to remind you of Him may prove helpful. I happen to have been brought up in a branch of Christian tradition that minimizes the use of statuary or visible representations in worship. Yet I can appreciate how helpful to the spirit of devotion a fine representation of the figure of Christ can be.

I suggest you use a meaningful picture of Jesus to help visualize Him. The physical faces we see leave an imprint on us. In the rush hours at the end of the day, bump into a person, as you turn a corner, and look into a face that is

harried and irritated. Though the meeting be momentary, that irascibility is communicated to you. It adds another stress to nerves already worn thin by the troubles of the day.

But a kindly, patient face reverses the reaction. That is the essential idea of Hawthorne's *The Great Stone Face.* A little lad, watching through the years the majestic face on the side of the hill, comes in time to be the exact image of that which held his gaze. The character he sees in the noble face on the heights becomes his character.

Think about the face of Jesus. What do you see? I am sure His was a warm face. It would be gladly welcomed anywhere. He taught that God loves all men and that men are brothers. That sympathy would be in the face—a face that would be welcome and at home in Tokyo or Manila, Fairbanks or Tangier, New York or Vladivostok.

It is interesting to note that artists of every race and nation have portrayed Jesus with the distinctive quality of their own people in the color of His skin, the contour of the beard, the angle of the eyebrow. In a church housing a Negro congregation, I have seen His face darkly pigmented. In Syria His face was painted as that of an Arab. A Chinese representation of the Master shows eyelids slanting upward. Each artist is saying, "This Jesus belongs to us. We know him. He knows us. He is our Friend."

Then think of His serenity and see it in His face. It is so that Duccio di Buominsegma portrays it in the thirteenth century, Jacopo Tintoretto in the sixteenth, and Rembrandt in the seventeenth. How you and I need to see that face in this confused twentieth century!

A responsive, interested face it was. Imagine it looking with concern into your own heart. You see His compassion in a brief incident after He was taken from Gethsemane by the soldiers. During the night, waiting outside the courts of

the Sanhedrin, where Jesus was being questioned, Peter three times denied the Lord. Then toward dawn, Jesus, shackled, passed by, "and the Lord turned and looked on Peter." Through the dissolving shadows Peter saw the face of the Saviour. Jesus said nothing. There was no condemnation. No petulance. "Peter, I know you've betrayed me. How could you after all my teaching and loving loyalty toward you?" No, nothing like that. Peter only saw the face. It communicated a message that must have said, "Peter, I'm sorry for you. I understand what you've been through. You are tired. But you and I both know what you've done is beneath you. You will not do such again. I feel with you in your regret. I'm sorry not only *for* you, I am sad *with* you. But Peter, I am not just sad. I am hopeful. You will learn from this and be ever stronger and wiser to lead the cause I commit to your hands."

You and I can "see" that face. Make a practice of visualizing in your mind the brotherliness, serenity, responsiveness, compassionate understanding, and hopefulness that characterize it. The Great Companion so draws near and goes with you in your deepest aloneness.

Then too we sense the companionship of Jesus as we listen to His corrections and reproofs. There are human advisers before whom you may be reluctant to confess your errors, and whose judgment as to the way for elevating your life you may question. If by reading about Jesus and coming to know Him you see Him as "supreme" among men and before God, you may find Him the supreme confessor. He, according to the Scripture, pleads for us before the Father. There is an intimate bond established, a deeper companionship consummated, as before Him you confess your wrongdoing and know

His forgiveness and the gentle counsel to "go and sin no more."

We are told that during the early years of Christianity the followers of Jesus had various signs by which they revealed to each other that they were devotees of Christ. In the dust of the roadside one man would draw the symbol of an anchor, a fish, or a cross. The fellow traveler would know that that sign meant companionship with Christ. In their common allegiance they would be drawn nearer to each other. Continuing on the journey, as they communed and reasoned about spiritual matters, the Great Guide and Friend would be felt near hallowing their friendship with His friendly presence.

That experience is repeated time and time and time again today. Our deepest friendships come not as we look at each other, but rather as some common ideal causes us to look upward and outward together. In holding to this mutual vision, we find we are close to one another. The vision itself becomes more precious and real.

I have known that experience and have also had a deep assuaging of the sense of aloneness by an awareness of Christ's presence.

Some years ago I stood in the Church of Santa Maria della Grazie, in Milan, Italy. There on the scaling masonry is da Vinci's immortal conception of "The Last Supper." As I looked at that fading composition, I was aware of the ingenious way the artist had arranged the figures so that all were related by position, direction of gaze, angle of the body, or the placing of hand or arm to the figure in the center. Even though some of the disciples were not looking at Him, the Master was their primary concern, and one felt His affection for every man there.

My mind recalled who those disciples were—fishermen, a tax collector, a politician, men who knew doubts, men who had flaws. They could be from any generation in time. The thought moved on—all men who are drawn to Jesus are in the larger composition of the Christian fellowship, which that painting symbolizes. No matter where we are, Jesus' love and companionship reaches out to be as close to us as it is to John, whose head is so close to the Master's breast. Standing before that painting I felt the reality of Jesus' words: "I will not leave you alone. I will come unto you."

On another occasion the sense of Christ's living presence in history was particularly vivid. The place was the old city of Jerusalem. The time, January, 1955. There were evidences of the recent war in shattered buildings, barbed wire, tank traps, armed soldiers, and the brooding hatreds and suspicions of the inhabitants. Yet the glory of that city, in its high and strategic location, with innumerable reminders of the centuries of living and warring that marked its long life, overcame the feelings of despair that might dominate a visitor's heart.

I often felt this at evening time, when the touring of the day was ended. I went into the old city alone, walked along the narrow streets, slid past donkeys and humans bearing heavy burdens, smelling odors, seeing sights, and hearing sounds that were unchanged by the centuries. Pausing at the sight of Solomon's temple, or at the spot where the Master fell on the Via Dolorosa, or looking across the Valley of Jehoshaphat to the Mount of Olives where Jesus looked on the city and wept for it, brought the conviction that His life and spirit were the most significant elements of Jerusalem. Not the wars and the present bitter estrangements between men, not the shrines, the old or modern buildings, were the realest and most important things about Jerusalem. It was the

life of Jesus of which these sights were reminders. If the present city were completely reduced to rubble, as has happened so often through the ages, and the present conflict a forgotten page in the annals of history, the power of Jesus' life on the lives of men would go on unabated. And future visitors would be moved by an awareness which was mine. This was a hallowed place because Jesus had been here. He was and is the hope for the human mind and heart.

I write of these personal experiences to suggest to you the ever-present vitality of Christ's life. You feel a dynamic force as you think of Him, as you let the mind and heart recall Him by seeing a symbol associated with Him. It may be His words in the Bible. It can be a picture of His face. It can be in the act and attitude of a sincere Christian whose generosity and kindliness reflects His friendship. It can come in personal meditation and prayer or in the intimate spiritual searching with like-minded people. You may look on the cross in a silent church or perhaps be enfolded with the comfort of His presence as you sing with a congregation a hymn of praise to Christ.

Whatever the means, I wish for you one of the most uplifting experiences a man can know: the realization that you are not aimlessly adrift in a purposeless creation; a knowledge that beauty and goodness and nobility of life do not die; an awareness that you are never alone. He, who discloses most fully the Divine intent and persuasion, stands at the door of your solitude. You need not be companionless no matter where you are. You have a Friend who seeks you and who will draw near to you if you let Him. As you accept His companionship you know the power of the most gracious words ever spoken:

"Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

Chapter 8

The World of the Mind

"How can you live in Goshen?"
Said a friend from afar,
"This wretched country town
Where folks talk little things all year,
And plant their cabbage by the moon!"
Said I:
"I do not live in Goshen . . .
I eat here, sleep here, work here;
I live in Greece;
Where Plato taught,
And Phidias carved
And Epictetus wrote.
I dwell in Italy,
Where Michelangelo wrought
In color, form and mass;
Where Cicero penned immortal lines,
And Dante sang undying songs.
Think not my life is small
Because you see a puny place;

I have my books; I have my dreams;
A thousand souls have left for me
Enchantment that transcends
Both time and place.
And so I live in Paradise,
Not here."

That is how Edgar Frank portrays another type of experience to be had in aloneness. Through your mind you can have communion with the thoughts of other men and so with the individuals themselves. There is salvation from loneliness in the identification you can make with the changeless, "ever-living world" of thought and those who have had habitation here.

Earlier I told you of Dr. Arthur J. Brown, who is now aged ninety-eight. In a note to me he said, "I am not competent to discuss lonely hours for I have never had any. *My mind and heart have been kept too full.*" That kind of testimony is possible for you, too, if you make use of the limitless resources of your mind.

Adventures in this area bring some of the healthiest expansions for your life. No matter at which period in time, or where geographically you look, you will find exciting examples of individuals who achieved noble integration through cultivation of the mind. Let them become your companions.

A pilgrimage I recently made to the sites associated with the life of Jesus impressed me with this truth. But a mile from where I sat as I wrote this book there is a view that equals in a purely physical sense the sites around Galilee. The eye is lifted past cultivated fields to stands of pine and spr[illegible]. If the day is clear, you can see the strong rise of the Adi[illegible]lacks against the skyline. Pleasant to the eye though

the views about Nazareth and Capernaum may be, they do not surpass that physical setting.

The mirror of the lake at Tiberius breaks into ripples that gurgle over stones, just as on other lake shores in any one of a thousand locations in the world. The gentle elevation on which it is believed the Master gave the immortal Sermon on the Mount has its counterpart in Turkey and Tanganyika, Brazil and Bulgaria. But the receptive visitor who stands on that slope by Galilee is aware that He who taught here was not bound to the geography of this place. There was an eaglelike quality to His mind that soared above the limitations of time and place. One is reminded of the lasting power and appeal of the man who keeps his mind on the search for truth. There is a peace that comes, a wisdom that is spoken, a gracious life that is lived, that hallows any and every physical environment.

There is a fascinating aspect to this experience of exploration with the mind. You find yourself, you recognize part of your truest self in the great thoughts of other people. You may read a volume written by someone who lived two hundred years ago. Suddenly you come across a passage that makes you exclaim, "Why, I've felt that. I haven't put it just that way in words. But I know it's true." Mary Margaret McBride makes an interesting comment concerning books: They "carry me out of myself," she says. How true it is. Let someone's thoughts speak to you from a good book, and the troubles and immediate perplexities of the hour are lifted. Horizons expand. You meet new friends and you know you are not alone.

The kinship that is established through a truth held in common agreement provides some of the strongest supports for man. Two personal experiences with regard to ideas ex-

pressed in the ageless words of the Bible may illustrate this point.

Once in a European museum of antiquities I saw a beautifully executed dagger from the eighteenth century. It bore two inscriptions. On one side were the words, "Thy King and country's cause defend, though on the spot your life should end." Turning the blade, I read again, "A soft answer turneth away wrath." The latter words I had been required to learn in Sunday school.

I thought about the craftsman who fashioned that weapon, its owners and the possible uses to which it may have been put. There were no physical links between them and myself. But there was a bond because we both had read and heeded the same words that were cut into the shiny blade. Its owner may have trembled at the risks involved in battle. Yet the Bible-grounded admonition to stand in defense of justice brought me close to him. Here was a reminder that even if life was seemingly lost in death, there still was a victory if it was given in a great cause. That must have stiffened purpose and imparted courage to him, as it did to me. Perhaps its steel was buried in a foeman's heart. But cleaning the blade and reading the words, "A soft answer turneth away wrath," made the nameless warrior wonder about a better way of dealing with human differences. So it spoke to me, and I felt a kinship with generations past and present.

Then, shortly after the end of the second world war I was in Bavaria. I was conscious of a keen sense of lonesomeness. The long distance from home, inadequacy in speaking the languages about me, and feeling the poignancies of peoples who so recently knew the devastations of war all added to this feeling. My particular mission was to visit refugees settled in that area. I will never forget some Hungarian refugees living in decaying barracks at a place called Platling. They

were a people without a country or a church. Hungary, under Russia, was not their homeland. But modern Germany, defeated and adrift in the modern world, gave them no sense of belonging. Yet those stanch people were not without an ultimate ideology. They did have sources of comfort and direction.

This I learned in a laundry room, where they met for worship. No stained windows there, only cracks in weathered boards through which a raw spring wind dolefully whined. No pews, no altar, no cross, no clergyman. In their stead, a dirt floor, a few boxes, and an elder clad in rags, feet wrapped in burlap. Head uncovered, he moved to the center of the circle, opened a Bible, and read a passage in his native Hungarian tongue. In that reverent reading and attentive listening there was a binding of those people present, including myself, each to the other and to the final sources of personal and corporate strength. When the gathering was over there was a friendship between those people and me which was a far cry from our first meeting. Our shared experience had warmed us.

A number of years have passed since that occasion, but I still feel close to and exhilarated by those people with whom an unbreakable link was forged because of our common response to the abiding truth. Both in the present and in the whole heritage of yesterday there are such friendships for you to make. Even if your direct association with them is brief, the sharing of mutual ideas makes them ever-present to bless your aloneness.

Few of us realize the potential of our minds. If you do not have the sense of companionship by sharing the thoughts of others, there are endless frontiers for your own personal men-

tal exploration. These can make any specter of loneliness as unimpressive as the scarecrow to the farmer.

Dr. Norbert Wiener has been quoted as saying that no robot could come even close to duplicating the intricacy and complex possibilities of the human brain. A machine even remotely like it would have to be about the size of Rockefeller Center. It would take several lifetimes to complete the necessary wiring. The electrical requirements would be about equal to the power used now by the greater part of New York City. The necessary cooling system would be so enormous that you'd probably have to divert the Hudson to supply it.

How vast is the ingenuity of that brain of yours! Look at the panel of an airplane or at the open back of your watch and think of the mechanical and inventive genius that has gone into its creation. With your mind you can compare, identify, generalize, analyze, reason, form judgments, and draw conclusions. In a moment of time and a specific geographical location, you can still transcend that hour and place. Your mind can take you from the present moment to yesteryear . . . to tomorrow . . . from an imperfect condition to a better one. It can picture for you not just what you are now but what you can be in the future.

There is a great and usually untapped reservoir of elasticity and adaptability within you. The mind is the captain, at the head of the column of abilities which you can adjust, reorganize, change. Recently Dr. Lauretta Bender, senior psychiatrist at Bellevue Hospital, said that more children should be delinquent than actually are. She found in them, she said, an "amazing capacity to tolerate bad parents, poor teachers, dreadful homes and communities." She pointed out that "all infants are born with a capacity to identify themselves with an adult who can give them some kind of posi-

tive guidance and a feeling of belonging." But even where this important ingredient may be lacking, the majority of us are not overwhelmed. The limitless resources of the mind, stimulated and directed, can give us a sense of "belonging to" and "being possessed by" ideas outside the restrictions of the day.

One evening our family watched a television program called "The $64,000 Question." With millions of other people we saw a shoemaker from New York appear on the screen. There was humility, warmth, and self-reliance in his face and bearing. He answered successfully a four-part question about an opera by Verdi. He knew that it was *Aïda* and that it gave Toscanini recognition in Brazil. It was, he correctly said, presented first in Cairo, Egypt, on Christmas Eve, 1871. That man did not live in a tiny shoe shop, nor was he bound to a world of people with run-down heels. His mind opened to him the world of music. He was a proof of how the mind can help us grow in aloneness, and in the growing we gain grace for each passing hour.

I am always impressed with the boundless areas that invite mental exploration. Once, in a medical library, I took down a book entitled *Nervous Diseases in Infants, Children and Adolescents.* Surely this might seem a narrowly limited field. But was it a thin pamphlet of a few pages which I held in my hands? Quite the contrary—eleven hundred pages of specialized information! Skimming through portions of it, I saw the complexity of the field: here were thousands of frontiers beckoning pioneers in medical research to answer baffling questions.

Anywhere you turn you find the same story. It seems to me to be particularly so in the social and humane sciences. Granted that the physical sciences, even with the great ad-

vances made, still have more questions than answers. It's true, too, that every new discovery, such as that of the harnessing of the atom, broadens the area for new application and fresh thinking. But the area regarding man himself has as many unexplored regions. The times call for explorations. How can we live together agreeably? What is our true nature? Which is the road to personal fulfillment? What are the landmarks that lead to harmony in a marriage, a community, the conclave of nations? The possibilities for expansion are boundless. It is the mind that is challenged to break new trails.

One individual who has done a masterful job of personal integration tells of successful techniques used to give dynamic impulse to daily living. "I try to be mentally aware of God at all times and to see what He is trying to do, and to be thankful. For instance, I face the fact that I can hold this pencil and see with my eyes, and have paper to write on, and an eraser on the end of the pencil—which leads me to the thought of where it comes from and so on. Thinking of appreciating God in all things keeps the mind too busy to be lonely. In fact, appreciation of God grows with each day once it has begun. There is room for appreciation in all that we see—the sky, trees, the good air that we breathe, the water of the world and rain when it comes. Snow and the beauty of it. Cold and warmth, in climates.

"I believe that God gives us these for our good. My mind leads me to feel that it is the construction we put on these things which does us good or bad. God gave us the ability to think constructively or destructively—the power to be kind or unkind, to choose right or wrong. I believe God molds our destiny according to what we do with what He gave us. My mind and heart both join in lighting up a great truth—*as a man thinketh so shall he be.*"

You can do such exploring. As you think of life and its meaning and how best to live it, you will find answers that give you assurance and strength. You don't have to be dominated by someone else's thoughts or the pressure of the environment in which you happen to live. With your mind, "you can get away from yourself." From outside yourself you can look on what is you, where you are, and the direction you'd like to be going. In your mind you can set the course that will bring you to where you want to be.

I know a woman who has been confined for some years to a couch in one room. Yet, through her mental eyes, the whole world is seen. Visit her and you leave unaware that you have been in the presence of an invalid. You are excited about a recent book of which she has spoken, or a truth she discovered in a mind of generations past. She may have thrown fresh light on a personal problem of yours, or enabled you to see some phase of the international scene in a new light. Her conviction is one that can be the same for you —limited perhaps in body, but unlimited in mind!

Using this powerful faculty of the mind keeps one from the isolation that can start the infection of loneliness. A friend questioned the title of this book, *You Are Never Alone.* The reaction was, "It would be a terrible thing to never be alone. I cherish the small fragments of time I can get to have a bit of solitude. In the course of the day I'm drained and pulled apart in a hundred directions by other people. I want some time to try to put the fragments of *me* back together. And I don't want any one else around."

That, I felt, was a sound observation and certainly indicated a basic need, which I'm sure is yours too. There are times when in your aloneness just doing nothing, physical rest, or diverting reading is the most healing use of solitude. Certainly there is a need to escape the jarring and tearing

intrusions—to have the experience of being truly alone. But I have used the words "never alone" as I hope you have realized, to show that there are endless resources available to make that aloneness most enriching and fruitful. The companionships are of your own making. They are yours to choose and invite. You can leave them out of your life or bring them in at will.

A cousin of mine is a pilot flying between the Pacific Northwest and Alaska. His home is in the state of Washington. Some distance back from the Alaskan coastline he has a section of land which claims much of his interest and effort. He has diverted a stream to flow to a particular area where he washes for gold. He has so arranged his schedule that the summer weeks, when the weather is good, he can be in his Alaskan domain.

While all of us may not be able to separate our lives geographically in this way, we can stake out a claim in the endless realm of the intellect. According to your desire, you can build a lean-to or a cabin or a castle. The spot is yours. You have a sense of belonging when you are there. And you are not lonely. If there is aloneness there, you are glad of it.

As a matter of fact, the establishment of "a mental claim" in the vast world of the intellect is one of the most important things we can do to achieve mental health. If we don't do it, we will deny ourself some of the richest moments we can ever experience.

A retired schoolteacher, now eighty-six years old, has shared with me some of the dominant ideas that have directed her life. She says, "Years ago I read a little book by Kate Douglas Wiggin that had these thoughts, 'She had been born with a capacity for helping lame dogs over stiles. . . . The world must be mothered somehow, and there are plenty of women

who lack the time or the strength, the gift or the desire, the love or the patience, to do their share . . . this gap seems to be filled now and then . . . claiming every child in the universe as her own.' "

She mentioned verses from the Bible that had been planted deep in her consciousness during childhood. "Let not your heart be troubled. Neither let it be afraid." "Seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us." These and a petition—"When our feet grow weary and our faith grows dim, help us to follow close after the perfect one"—were some of the stakes that marked out a mental claim, where a part of her lived.

In the course of the years she had her share of "life's 'down' experiences." I cite only one, which is deeply revealing. "I stood one day on a landing in school watching a group of high school children come in. I opened a letter and read of the death of the only man whom I have ever wanted to marry. It had happened suddenly and there was no one who knew that I ought to be told. *I went on as usual that day . . .*"

She has not told me of her thoughts during those hours. But, knowing her, I know this. She was walking on the familiar, loved ground of her mental homestead. "The world must be mothered somehow . . . let not your heart be troubled . . . run with patience the race . . . help us to follow close after the perfect one." In the immediate present there was a terrible tragedy. Before her were young people engaged in the routine of study which she was committed to lead. You need not ask how she could go on when you know of the world of thought that was hers.

Years later, on her retirement from a school with more than eight thousand pupils, the principal wrote a tribute,

which was given her by the faculty. It reads in part: "for discovering and befriending hapless, baffled children in this great institution and cheering them on their way."

You know how refreshing it is to have a vacation place where you are completely free of the drain of your daily work. Live for a time with the mountains or the sea, and you come back to the task that is yours with perspective, appreciation, and direction. You need to engage in that kind of mental vacationing to the place that gives you intellectual peace and direction. You can do it from your office or your home. A few moments of flight, and you are there. A deeper calm is in your heart. Then, in a flash, you are back again at the work that must be done.

In finding new truths, in greeting old, solid thoughts that have nurtured your years, there is a communication, a form of friendship, that makes talk about loneliness ridiculous. In Admiral Byrd's chronicle of his weeks of isolation in the Antarctic, he affirms, "I am finding that life here has become largely a life of the mind. *Unhurried reflection is a sort of companion.*" (Italics mine.) The truth of experience seems to be that you can be in a crowd but, lacking a mental homestead you can be desperately lonely. Yet, in the deepest isolation, in the comfort of your mental abode, you are never alone.

Once having laid out a claim in any one given moment of time, knowing it as your own, you will find it can be yours always. You can go back to it time and again for a renewal of yourself. Admiral Byrd thought in his aloneness:

"If man is, as I believe, an integral part of the universe and since grace and smoothness mark the movements of most things in it, . . . then a normal mind should function with something of the same harmoniousness. . . . There was the sense of identification with vast movements. . . . If I had

never seen a watch and should see one for the first time, I should be sure its hands were moving according to some plan and not at random. Nor does it seem any more reasonable for me to conceive that the precision and order of the universe is the product of blind chance. This whole concept is summed up in the word harmony."

For Admiral Byrd that experience was indelible. The sense of the physical location might grow dim, but the intellectual concepts won there need not fade. The idea of "harmony" in all nature would always be present. Contemplating it would not fail to bring some of the calm and companionship felt when that intellectual claim was first identified as his own.

This intellectual area of yours could be entitled "What I think makes life worth living!" I repeat, you need that deed signed and sealed by your best thinking and know it to be your own. You need to be the one to discover the country, to find it deeply congenial, and to say, "This is mine. This I believe. Here is my homeland."

A man who went through the last war confesses, "I tried war as an escape from the horrors of peace and found it a relief in some degree, for it forced me to be part of a group; and the grim necessity of staying alive took my mind off my usual solitary brooding or pleasure-chasing. It was the aftermath I could not face—the return to peacetime loneliness, to a world filled with desperate people, intent, not on staying alive, but on finding some worthwhile reason for being alive at all. What overwhelmed me . . . was the recognition that if life is merely the enjoyment to be gained from the passing moment, then life simply isn't worth the trouble."

His words are echoed by thousands who have not laid out mental homesteads they can call their own. While I know that each person must find his own place, yet it may be help-

ful to suggest some markers that have guided some men to find their site and to hold it against all comers of time and circumstance. For me the words "reason" and "love" become increasingly important and basic. Within the concept of "reason" I see order, justice, freedom, fairness, clarity. And around the majestic idea of "love" I find harmony, kindness, humility, dedication, healing. My wanderings in my own personal claim, where these have become firm boundary markers, lead to the conviction that the origin of these is in a Providential purpose we call God. We are a part of that purpose. The end of life is to grow into that intention which is at the core of creativity. Oriented by reason and by love, I see personal life growing and progressing. I see satisfaction in keeping in touch with that purpose. It brings direction and peace and strength. It is both a reason for living and an acceptable end of living.

It is not advisable to belabor you with the many offshoots of such musing. But I find that mental homestead a place of increasing companionship. Others who have thought in this manner are there in spirit. The place becomes richer with associations as the years go by, and it is this relationship, at-homeness, identification, that wards off the pangs of loneliness.

There is an ever-increasing sense of completeness and harmony to the personality that grows in mental understanding and belief. You may not feel at any given moment that you have all the final answers. You will know that your best judgment is still imperfect. You will see that your ideas have enlarged with the passing years. But you will always have a point of reference. Thinking and acting on your thoughts will have given you increasing courage to accept and make changes. You will realize that ancient good may become out-

moded. You won't be afraid to venture forth with the best lights you have, even though you know there may not be enough illumination to cover the whole surface.

One of the great biblical affirmations is the one from II Timothy. "God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." I see many people who face personal problems, questions that have significant bearing on the course of their lives, but who seem afraid to find the answers for themselves. They are unaware of their potential or they fear their own inadequacy. Some do nothing because no scientifically validated or provable answer seems obtainable. They say they are unsure. They may make a mistake.

This is folly. It increases the vacuousness of man's inner life. The truth is that the overwhelming majority of "real" questions that you and I ask can't be answered in an ultimately final fashion. Neither can they come from someone else. Aren't some of those questions you ask: What should be my life work? Whom should I marry? What is the best way to deal with the problem I now have? How should I plan for the future? Others, seeking on a deeper level, probably have these among them: What is the real end of living? How can I leave the deepest and most useful influence on the world? In what way of belief and action can I find the fullest satisfaction? What is God? Of what significance is that concept to man's life?

The answers that can be given to those important questions cannot be "proved" in a test tube or by formula or equation. But there are answers for *you*. Unless you seek to find them you will be dwarfing an important facet of yourself—your infinite capacity for thought and evaluation. Find them. Believe them. Venture into life with them.

As you consider this matter you come up against the stubborn fact that our best judgment is incomplete and may be imperfect too. You can't avoid that fact. Accept it. And with it accept the truth that you have vast flexibility. We were made to learn, to grow, to expand our horizons. You can continue to build each new chamber for the mind "nobler than the last," till the day comes when you leave your outgrown shell "by life's unending sea."

Dr. Henry Sloan Coffin once said in a private conversation, "I get so tired of my mind and the same old thoughts I have." It was a significant remark. It indicated an eagerness to grow. There was recognition that mental enlargement was the essence of life. But I don't feel we need belittle our thoughts because of age or familiarity. The best thoughts are often the oldest. They have stood the test of time. Growth may be blocked in worshiping at the shrine of ideas simply because these ideas are hallowed by antiquity or authority. The important thing is to say, "The idea may be old as man's consciousness, but for me it is more than a mental museum piece from history. *It is my judgment.* The conclusion is *mine.*"

This matter of thinking involves the whole man. Emotion and the will to act make up a kind of Siamese-twin concept, connected to the mind. The two cannot be separated. In Llewellyn's *How Green Was My Valley,* the Reverend Gruffydd gives wise advice to little Huw. He says, "Think. Watch. Think again. And then one step at a time to put things right. As a mason puts one block at a time. To build solid and good. So with thought. Think. Build one thought at a time. Think solid. Then act." One doesn't follow that program without getting enthusiastic. The heart gets in the picture, saying, "I love this thought and I am glad in what it has led me to do." The Bible says faith, "if it hath not works, is dead." So

thought, without the visualization of where it will be applied, and the warmth and interest that prompt one to venture the act, is also dead. It is abstract, unrelated to what is.

Observation of and participation in life are essential to completing our thoughts about life. One may go to the solitude of one's own mental homestead. But one takes there the impressions of life in its busy whirl. They are evaluated there in the atmosphere of what one has found to be true. Petrarch was drawn to the world of thought in his youth. But later on, with added wisdom from years of experience, he confesses the partialness of his outlook. "Always in my hand or hidden in my cloak I carried a book, and thoughts seemed to me to be so much more than things of the passing world—the world of action and achievement—seemed to me to be an unworthy world, and the world of thought to be the true and real world. *It will thus be seen that I was young and my mind unformed.*"

The great word is *balance*—a balance between thought and feeling and action—a balance between what is old and what is new—what was true yesterday, what is everlastingly valid, and what the mind sees and the heart feels now. And it is by the discipline of thinking, by probing in the world of the mind, that the scales are made even. Elbert Hubbard saw that "some have narrowed their minds and so fettered them with the chains of antiquity that not only do they refuse to speak save as the ancients spake, but they refuse to think save as the ancients thought. God speaks to us, too, and the best thoughts are those now being vouchsafed to us. We will excel the ancients!" So we can. But it won't come about if you cry, "To hell with the past," or bow before the proclamation, "There is nothing new under the sun." Both are wrong. And it is the exploration of your mind that will tell you it is so.

These thoughts lead me to emphasize that *this is no easy quest.* The way is long and hard. In one of Rossetti's poems the question is asked, "Does the road go uphill all the way?" The answer comes, "Yes, to the very end." But the questioner tries again: "Does the day's journey take the whole day long?" The response is clear: "From morn to night, my friend."

At times I feel we are sold short on the simplified versions of "How To"—how to achieve peace of mind, happiness, the art of successful living, or what-have-you. There are no short cuts to the truth that is real for you. Granted, others can give us terse suggestions and all kinds of directions. But we make our way alone—and most often with cries for help that echo unanswered.

You and I will do well to take to ourselves two sentences from Plato. André Maurois tells how a professor at the Lycée of Rouen strode into his first meeting with a class and, without saying a word, wrote the two quotations on a blackboard:

One must search for the truth with all one's soul.

And:

One must take the longest way.

But it is worth all effort. Search for truth and you grow in humility, in reverence for life. You become like one of the wisest men I know, who confesses, "The longer I live the less ready I am to condemn quickly or to offer pat solutions to other people's problems. 'I am not sure,' and, 'I don't know,' are expressions I use more and more." Yet, like that man, you will have a breadth and depth of understanding and feeling that comes only through the years with searching. More than this, there will be greater inner resources of confidence and peace.

One of the earliest journeys made into the interior of Mongolia and China was by one named Friar William of

Rubruck. In his record of that journey he tells how careful thought was given to each particular. Some distance beyond modern Istanbul he tells of a frustrating experience:

"They gave us the choice whether we would have carts with oxen to carry our effects, or sumpter horses. And the merchants of Constantinople advised me to take carts, and that I should buy the regular covered carts such as the Ruthenians carry their furs in, and in these I could put such of our things as I would not wish to unload every day: should I take horses it would be necessary to unload them at each stopping-place and to load other horses; and furthermore I would be able to ride more slowly following the gait of the oxen. Then I accepted their advice, unfortunately however, for I was two months on the way to Sartach, which I might have traveled in one had I gone with horses."

That is a characteristic commentary on the man whose decisions and directions are made on the counsel only of others—two months, when it might have been one! Friar William learned from this error. The remainder of the journey shows him listening to the best advice of others, but making the decisions in the light of his own growing judgment. The course each of us takes in life is different from that of our fellows. There is a unique combination of background, talent, inclination, need, that distinguishes you from every other human being. In the end you alone are the one to best direct your course and to decide on the impedimenta you will carry. Make the smallest decision. Then stand on it. Learn from it. I believe the philosopher Berdyaev is saying this when he writes, "I have been a learner all my life, but I make truth, which is universal, my own from within, through exercising my freedom, and my knowledge of truth is my own relation to truth."

When a man so thinks, when he comes to his own conclusions, he changes not only himself—the atmosphere, the environment about him changes to aid and further his thought. Haven't you seen this happen in a conference or committee meeting? The group may not be getting anywhere. The atmosphere is charged with the tension of varying prejudices and points of view. Then one individual says, "I recognize merit in all that has been presented. But it is not leading us to a satisfactory conclusion. I have given sincere thought to the matter. It has occurred to me that if we could agree on 'this' and then all proceed to do 'that,' at least a portion of our dilemma would be resolved. It just might be that trying out this procedure we'd come to a final solution that would be best for all."

More than once, when such conciliatory and wise thinking has been expressed, I have seen a situation change completely. Disagreement turns into agreement. Hot feelings are replaced by cool reasoning. Whereas at first the group warranted the sour definition of a committee as a group who individually can do nothing and collectively decide that nothing can be done, now there is confidence that something can be done. It *will* be done.

In every age and clime men who have considered the power of thinking counsel us to watch and cultivate our thoughts. The reason? Thought *makes* us after its image. Thought molds the course of outward circumstance. Carlyle said, "You conquer Fate by thought. If you think the fatal thought of men and institutions, you need never pull the trigger. The consequences of thinking inevitably follow." Again he observes, "Gaze thou in the face of thy brother, in those eyes where plays the lambent fire of kindness, or in those where rages the lurid conflagration of anger; feel how thy own so quiet soul is straightway involuntarily kindled with the like,

and ye blaze and reverberate on each other, till it is all one limitless, confluent flame (of embracing love, or of deadly, grasping hate); and they say what miraculous virtue goes out of man into man."

The possibilities for different views of life are endless. As the intellectual view is opened on happy, constructive thought, the whole scene is changed as when the sun, breaking through a cloud bank, illumines a valley.

At the turn of the twentieth century Orison Swett Marden wrote a volume with the suggestive title, *Every Man a King*. Among his many sane admonitions is this pertinent one:

"Stoutly determine not to harbor anything in the mind which you do not wish to become real in your life. Shun poisoned thoughts, ideas which depress and make you unhappy, as instinctively as you avoid physical danger of any kind. . . . replace all these with cheerful, hopeful, optimistic thoughts. When you feel out of sorts . . . if you form the habit of suggesting to yourself some agreeable or pleasant subject, to dwell upon or think about, or take up some word or idea which will suggest pleasure, happiness, and harmony, you will be surprised to see how quickly you can change the whole course of your thought, and when this is changed, the feeling will change also. You will increase your courage and confidence, and this is half the battle. You will soon find that your environment will begin to change."

It is undeniable—the way we think determines what we are and what happens in the environment about us. Think "order" and your life becomes more orderly. Think "peace" and a sense of peace and calm radiates from you. Think life is good and both nature and man will prove to you the rightness of your thought. Think you are ineffective and circumstances will trip you up to show that you are correct. But

set your mind on the idea that you are reliant, competent, strong—and it will be so.

In our mind we can have communion and friendship with the great minds of the ages. We find ourselves in the thoughts of others. There is a deep companionship in this experience. The mind has infinite abilities to steer life through the vicissitudes of change. We can make "mental homesteads" of our own, where, away from the pressures of daily life, we can regain our perspective. We will have a sense of "belonging." We won't have all the answers; but we'll have enough guidance to take the next important step. With balance, plus the capacity to learn from errors, we grow in confidence and self-reliance, in freedom from loneliness. The quest, though not easy, is deserving of our full and continuous concern. By our thoughts we change ourselves, and the world helps us to fulfill what we affirm in our minds.

Let us *trust our own honest thinking.* It isn't our true inner selves that cloud the picture for us, but the repressions, the uncertainties, conflicts, and the neurotic standards of society, which prevent us from seeing things clearly.

And the way out?

It is to use our aloneness to stimulate our minds, to see that our mental powers enlarge with understanding.

And so we come to a deep companionship which the world can never give to us and can never take away.

Chapter 9

Togetherness in Prayer

In the Gospel of Luke there is a sentence concerning Jesus, "And it came to pass, as he was alone praying, his disciples were with him." Consider this paradox: we are told that He was alone; yet in that aloneness His disciples were with Him. That sentence presents a truth worthy of our consideration. In prayer there can be a vivid sense of togetherness. In this particular instance the sentences immediately following say Jesus asked the disciples, "Whom say the people that I am?" He was alone. But in the sensitive expansion of the soul in prayer, He was close to the disciples. More than that, it is suggested that in prayer awareness of others was sharpened too.

Prayer has many more facets than this one. As a matter of fact, the particular emphasis that prayer creates a relatedness to man and mankind is often minimized. Most often prayer is thought to be only man's communion with God. It is thought to be a way to get what you want or need. Prayer, as a vehicle for inner renewal and as a means to achieve forgiveness, is rightfully emphasized. The consideration of how prayer is answered and the proper techniques for fruitful prayer are of great interest to many students of this subject.

These are all valid, and we will touch on some of these aspects. But, like a single bright thread that is woven into the cloth on the loom, I want you to see that one of the aspects of prayer is the way it relates you to other men and fits you for a deeper togetherness.

A friend of many years has written me, "I have never been alone, because of the inner friendships I have known through prayer." That friend is one of the most sensitive persons I have ever known. The secret is given, I feel, in the words, "inner friendships I have known through prayer."

Just before the last war the French doctor Alexis Carrel expressed his grave concern for modern man. He said we have put too high a premium on reason and minimized intuition. Feeling has been made subordinate to intelligence. The tendency, as he saw it, was toward a spiritual blindness. The danger of such an infirmity, according to Dr. Carrel, lay in the fact that it did not permit man "to be an element good for the constitution of society."

This is an intriguing comment. If you ask what ingredients create individuals who make the finest contribution to their society, I feel the answer must be sensitiveness, sympathy, understanding, the feeling of responsibility, and the compulsion to respond to other's needs. The individual who is the good element among men is one who says, "I *am* my brother's keeper."

Ask next, how do we create such individuals? How can I, myself, become a person who feels for and responds to my fellow men? Your answer is this: through the cultivation of inner conviction and feeling. The mind must believe in man. The heart must be warmed to respond to man. And for the specific way to build such consciousness, the best is prayer! In deep aloneness the mind and heart are lifted to

the ultimate concern for man. In seeking and finding the presence of God one discovers the universal compassion for all mankind. The consciousness of the whole human family is expanded.

It is George Meredith to whom is attributed the statement, "Who rises from prayer a better man, his prayer is answered." I am inclined to feel that, in this sense, no prayer is unanswered. From my observation and experience great prayer brings you close to ultimate reality and enriches you; a new atmosphere of brotherliness is breathed. You become more keenly aware of your fellow men. You are alone, yet a new dimension of togetherness comes deep into consciousness. You may feel that you are but one drop of water, but your prayer can make you understand that you are a part of the universal tide of humanity. You move with all mankind, better fitted for that role of relationships.

This kind of prayer may be defined as the merging of your highest thinking and your purest feeling lifted to God in solitude. With deep affection, you raise your own best thoughts to the peaks of ultimate truth.

Desiderius Erasmus, one of the greatest scholars of the fifteenth century, sensed this. In his *Enchiridion* he distinguishes between prayer and knowledge. "Perfect prayer lifteth up the mind unto good; knowledge armeth the mind with wholesome precepts and honest opinions—one cannot lack the other." Yet, when he pleads for the right kind of prayer he says, "The use of prayer is not to mumble and babble much, as they do that are not ripe in God's spirit. For five words spoken in knowledge are better than ten thousand babbled with the mouth." Erasmus would agree, I feel, to our simple definition.

The emphasis I want to make is that prayer involves your keenest, broadest thinking. I have always responded to Vic-

tor Hugo's words, "Certain thoughts are prayers. There are moments when, whatever be the attitude of the body, the soul is on its knees." The thought of Ralph Waldo Emerson has always struck a responsive chord in me. He asked, "is not prayer also a study of truth—a sally of the soul into the unfound infinite?" Then he continues, "No man ever prayed heartily without learning something. But when a faithful thinker, resolute to detach every object from personal relations and see it in the light of thought, shall, at the same time, kindle science with the fire of the holiest affections, then will God go forth anew into the creation."

You see, the type of prayer we are describing is more than pleading or wheedling. It is not putting on God's shoulders a task or responsibility we should meet ourselves. No asking that the hurricane hit some other section but not mine. No whining that the load is heavy and asking for a relief that my own hands can bring. No attempt to escape from solving a troublesome problem by being cuddled into a false security. It is a standing as straight and true as you can in your own integrity. It is an opening of the heart and a waiting of the affections for the refreshment and direction that can come only from God's perfect truth and perfect love.

The prayer we are considering is specific in its intention. You are seeking togetherness with your fellow men, which means understanding. You are asking for the way to live most usefully in the society from which you cannot be divorced. You are wanting a sense of relatedness to the heritage of history and the wave of the future which is the work of both God and man. You come to this experience of prayer knowing that your deepest personal peace cannot be achieved unless you have right thoughts about and relations with your fellow men. You will honestly confess your sins against your brethren. You will seek guidance in specific instances be-

tween someone else and you. Is there marital tension? A family friction? A lack of harmony between yourself and your associates? After you think and evaluate as best you can, bring the result, together with your sincerest feeling, to the high altar of prayer.

I hope you will discover that this kind of praying really helps. It will fit you to be a better parent, citizen, mate, friend, associate—a better human being. This is so, because, among other things, *such prayer educates the subconscious.* Particularly if you practice such prayer regularly, you will find there are automatic reactions to situations where you respond with wisdom and discretion, which makes for harmony and health. A great golfer can speak of "automatic muscle reaction" when, after months of practice, he takes his stance and starts his swing. He doesn't think of the moment his weight should shift and wrists start to snap. The right muscles automatically play their part in the intricate maneuver.

So with the practice of prayer that seeks the way to social health. It is known, without conscious thought, that the perfect triangle of life is not only man with himself and his God. It is completed with harmonious relationships of man with man. As the muscles of forearm, leg, and shoulder automatically play their part in the balanced golf swing, so innumerable truths, feelings, and convictions do their part to make smooth human relationships. There is a sense of timing which will tell you when to speak and when to be silent. The notes of reproof and tenderness are sounded in their proper sequence. Patience, tolerance, understanding, love, all silently do their constructive work.

There are specific steps in the development of prayer which brings these ends. But a sense of relatedness and togetherness will be furthered if, in the attitude of prayer, you think of

the people with whom you have similarities. Then become conscious of and evaluate the ones with whom there are apparent differences.

On the first score, one of the finest patriots I know has told me of an experience that not only brought a deep love for America but inspired a life of selfless service to the nation. This is his testimony:

"I was born on a Midwestern farm. The land had been settled by my great-grandparents, of Scottish stock. Stories of their hardships and courage and faith were a part of my upbringing. Their hands and hearts, like those of my grandparents and parents, had gone into the development of our farm. But I had the feeling, even as a very little boy, that there was a love for something bigger and more important than the little section where we lived.

"A great aunt gave me a clue. She once said to me, 'David, we who came here wanted not only a place to make a good living. We came with a dream for a better life. America is not Hayes County or all the counties and states put together. It isn't land or rivers or mountains, or food and clothing and wealth. It's people who have hope and faith. It's a place where a boy like you can have a big soul—a soul with lots of belief in his fellow men—a soul with a big horizon for human freedom—a soul that shows a love of God by loving and serving your country and all its people.' "

My friend went on to tell me that he began thinking about the people who had come to America. During collegiate and postgraduate study in the ensuing years his major study was our national history. He comments, "While my great aunt's words appeared like ultra-pious nationalism, from which I shied off, yet they stuck. I was related to that way of looking at life and I found myself increasingly responsive to all the various streams of culture and nationalities that came to

our shores, both in the past and in the present. I had an increasing concern for every immigrant. I found this, too, that what I once considered great differences diminished until there were no real basic differences at all."

You can see how wholesome and freeing such an experience is. Barriers between men are lowered. Inner friction and prejudice between people are eliminated. Bonds of common understanding and appreciation develop and there comes greater mental health and a life of a more satisfying nature.

One of the articles of the Apostles' Creed, "I believe in the communion of saints," suggests a similar experience. Across the centuries there have been countless men and women, from all cultures and walks of life, rich and poor, wise and foolish, strong and weak, who have affirmed a common faith in God and in man. As you affirm that faith and open your mind and heart in sensitive awareness, you can have communion with the generations of individuals who have so believed. Think of them, try to visualize them. Let them become so real to you that, feeling their fears, knowing their pressing anxieties, you are at home with them.

Such rumination in the presence of the Divine is particularly fruitful when you center your concern on those who appear to be different. Who are they for you? People of a different race? If you are an Anglo-Saxon and Gentile, are they the Jew or the Negro, the Indian or the Asiatic? If you are white-skinned and Protestant in religion, do the yellow- or brown-skinned, the Mohammedans and Buddhists and followers of Confucious, seem alien?

You can't really engage in humble and earnest prayer and continue long in any insular attitude. The God, into whose presence you seek to enter, created men of one blood. The fears and needs, aspirations and affections, that are in you

are in others too. The everlasting concern at the heart of creation is centered not on you alone but on all mankind. To feel that breadth is to make you participator in it. You begin to think more "us" and less "me." You begin to be freed from self-concern and live more freely and gladly, sensing an at-homeness no matter where you are.

I have known a deep sense of relatedness with an Arab who was of the Mohammedan faith. Looking at a flock where new-born lambs were nuzzling their mothers, or appreciating the grace with which local women carried water pots on their heads, or hearing him speak with admiration of his children, I felt kinship with him. The desire for peace that was in him was also in me. The response to an almond tree in bloom, or an act of heroism in generations past, which stirred his heart, also stirred mine. The differences of nation, language, religion, political thought, color of skin, subsided. The sense of togetherness and similarity did a significant thing. It gave me confidence and hope about world affairs that I did not have before, inspiring a deeper sense of security in me. I was no longer a "foreigner" to him; his land and people were no longer alien to me. The feeling of lonesomeness was diminished before the growing knowledge that we were members of the same great human family. We were not different, but alike.

That kind of experience is desperately important in our world which is a tennis-ball-size in the universe, and still chasmed by unbridged ignorances and prejudices. Face-to-face and personal relationships are not always possible, though each of us can cultivate them more than we do. But in the silence of your study or bed chamber you can come, in spirit, before the great Creating God who has made all men. From His perspective, and breathing His spirit of love, look at those from whom you feel alienated. Think of them

honestly and clearly. Let your heart, in sensitive imagination, feel their want and needs, their hopes and terrors, and you'll find the walls of isolation crumbling. You will feel the strength which that high experience can bring.

One of the primary attitudes of prayer is that of adoration. The mind and heart have the sense of the holy, a feeling for the majestic eternal, and with reverent awe seek to enter into that presence. It is difficult to give you an analogy to this attitude. But if you have stood in silence on the edge of the Grand Canyon and gazed into the vast depths, scanned the amazingly beautiful distances, I am sure you have had sense of awe that lifted you above the place and time of the moment. You probably mused on the long stretch of time it took the powerful forces of wind and water to patiently cut that awesome furrow. And your soul expanded because you were part of a creation where there was such grandeur and loveliness.

In prayer something akin to this feeling is in the concept of "adoration." It involves humility and a feeling for the everlasting. Longfellow describes it well in his *Divine Commedia:*

> . . . as I enter here from day to day,
> And leave my burden at this minster gate,
> Kneeling in prayer, and not ashamed to pray,
> The tumult of time disconsolate
> To inarticulate murmurs dies away
> While the eternal ages watch and wait.

In prayer you are searching for a deeper "togetherness with your fellow men," an assurance that you are not isolated. Therefore you come to this time of prayer following the techniques of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. You leave the jarring divisions in the background. Your mind lifts it-

self to the breadth of God's eternity. Impatience falls from you; disturbing activity is outside your awareness now.

You respond to the vastness, the beauty, and the mysterious reality. You are one with it, "lost in wonder, love, and praise." Feeling the affection of the God of all men, you are aware of the generations yet unborn. That sense is expressed in a petition written by Joseph Fort Newton: "Make us . . . citizens of eternity in the shadow of time. Make us to know that we live in Thee, to whom death is but a cloud-shadow wandering across our human valley." It is felt too in the last words of Wacic the Caliph who died in 845 A.D.: "O thou whose kingdom never passes away, pity one whose dignity is so transient."

In the orbit of eternity, with its benign and universal concern for man, you are able to look at man with a new perspective. With a reverent awe of God comes a reverence and awe for that which is His concern. As you revere God, you become aware that God reveres man. You will not, then, look at your neighbor, whom you see daily, or the vast family of mankind, which you cannot see, with a feeling of meanness or resentment or isolation.

In *The Prophet,* Kahlil Gibran has written this passage:

. . . some of you have called me aloof . . .

True it is that I have climbed the hills and walked in remote places.

How could I have seen you save from a great height or a great distance?

How can one be indeed near unless he be far?

For myself, I know of no way to effect a closer consciousness of my fellow men than through the conviction that men are equal and are to be universally respected and helped. And that conviction is forged and fired in the experience

of prayer. God respects and loves His creation: man. As you, in your aloneness, stand before the eternity and grandeur that is God, that respect and love for man, which is at the heart of creation, becomes yours.

There *are* alienations between yourself and other men, either as individuals or races and nations. In human relationships, as in the area of mechanics, friction causes deterioration. The mechanical engineer does all in his power to reduce friction by cutting down pressure, by using lubricants, and particularly by making the area of possible friction as smooth and as small as possible.

In the relations of man with man, techniques that cut down friction are many. Most of us, by trial and error, learn certain techniques to keep our relationships smooth. We learn what should be said and what is better left unsaid—when to give in and when to stand our ground. But these and other techniques fall by the way unless there is some ultimate conviction that inspires us to keep trying. In my judgment, the sense of God, the sharing of His noble vision of "the Brotherhood of Man," is the primary *experience* to guide and keep us at the task of making things smooth and harmonious. And it is in the prayer of adoration that harmony among men is changed from idea to experience, from a thought to a way of life.

A second attitude in prayer is confession. "Our Father, forgive us, as we forgive . . ." is the way Jesus taught us to pray. Two aspects of this condensed quotation of the Lord's Prayer are significant for our present thinking. Notice that the prayer begins not with the word "My." With the first step toward God there is the recognition of His universality and of the fact that His concern is not restrictive. He may be my God, but He is every man's God. With this recogni-

tion, you come into His presence aware of all mankind. No selfish, petty, personally centered petition will be appropriate, for you will say, "*Our* Father."

That awareness of His universal concern will make you conscious of your failures against that spirit. You have acted in self-centered ways. You have been unjust and unfair toward your fellow men. You have withheld love from the loveless and the unlovely. You have "passed by on the other side" when you have seen real human need.

It is healthy to clear yourself of the burden of regret and recrimination. In the silent sincerity of the heart you know that you have missed the mark. It is good to articulate your faults. Your transgressions are not left hidden in some dark corner of your mind. They are brought out into the open. Honestly name what your fault has been. No need to be evasive or try to rationalize the fault. There is no hiding before God, before the searching light of perfection.

But the prayer of Jesus suggests an important element for successful confession. You seek forgiveness, but have you forgiven those who sinned against you? You recall other instances in which Jesus tells those who follow Him that they are not to come before God until they are right with their fellow men. He says if you have conflict with your brother, resolve the difficulty. Only then approach God with your act of devotion.

Your forgiveness makes you worthy of Divine forgiveness. If someone has done you injury or has transgressed some boundary of loyalty and affection, you must have the wisdom and sensitiveness to say, "I forgive you." Those same qualities condition your mind and soul to recognize and express your own faults. If you are great enough to forgive, you will be humble enough to be forgiven.

This process of forgiving others and seeking personal for-

giveness involves intelligent analysis and complete freedom from hypocrisy. Among the fragments left from the ancient Euripides there is this prayer, "Thou God of all! Infuse light into the soul of men, whereby they may be enabled to know what is the root from whence all their evils spring, and by what means they may avoid them." Forgiveness, in the highest sense, is not a mechanical process. It is deeply intellectual and profoundly spiritual. It is a coming to oneself. It is honestly seeing the state in which one is. It is a visualization of what one could be. It is a probing for those factors that brought on the present state, as Euripides suggests, and the determination to avoid them in the future.

You can't think of the evil that prompts unworthy acts without an awareness of the depth of that tendency. All men are part of a society that is imperfect. "That which we would do we do not do." The drag of inertia is in all of us. There are social forces such as war that put men in an environment where they seem forced to do evil things in spite of their lack of evil intent.

What will you do when you realize this? Give up in despair? No, that is not the way. To say that we are all caught in a vast web of evil and can't get out isn't altogether true. It's disloyal to the basic desire in man to improve.

To despise all mankind, including yourself, because error persists in human nature, is not the most worthy way. To despise leads to greater deterioration. You have to hold to the faith that love elevates, good will rectifies, warm trust in the good (in spite of the obvious presence of evil) makes the good expand—or all is lost.

The only valid way I can see is through the act of forgiveness. In the record of the Hebrews it is told that once a year the High Priest went before the Holy of Holies in the inner Tabernacle. There, alone and in silence, he offered sacrifice

"for himself and for the errors of the people." I hope you find that a deeply stimulating picture. There is no evasion here of the presence of evil. The people have committed errors. The High Priest himself needs, with them, the cleansing from the Divine. He goes into the most sacred place, aware of the breadth and depth of human fault and frailty. The presence of the Most Holy makes him more aware of social and personal sin. Yet there is confidence that the dark chains can be loosened, else he would not go in at all. The ultimate purpose before which he stands imparts an assurance that mistakes may be rectified, sins may be forgiven; though man may be momentarily abject and broken by imperfections, he can rise before his God and go forth into a new day where he will sin no more.

That kind of praying, with an awareness of the corporate sins that enmesh us, is right for you and for me. As part of mankind, the faults of the human race are in our own minds and hearts. To pray for forgiveness, with this vast consciousness, opens the flood gates for absolution.

Prayer involves not only adoration and confession but a thanksgiving too. Emerson's phrases have an authentic ring, "Prayer is the contemplation of the facts of life from the highest point of view. It is the soliloquy of a beholding and jubilant soul. It is the spirit of God pronouncing His works good."

Bring into your prayer the sense of gratitude. Think of the heroes, the saints, the selfless ones whose lives bless the centuries. Be grateful for the grand mystery of the Creator. This very attitude sharpens your sensitiveness to good men and binds them closer to you. You cannot be alone when you so express the spirit of deep appreciation.

Intercession is an important element of prayer. In adoration and confession and thanksgiving you pray *with* your fellow men. In intercession you pray *for* them. You remember the child's prayer, "Now I lay me down to sleep." Its petitions are centered on the individual who does the praying. Following the last war a different version of it was sent by German children to Americans, expressing a beautiful spirit of intercession:

> Now I lay me down to sleep;
> I pray Thee, Lord, the souls to keep
> Of other children, far away,
> Who have no homes in which to stay,
> Nor know where is their daily bread
> Nor where at night to lay their head,
> But wander through a broken land
> Alone and helpless—Take their hand!

If such a prayer of intercession is not cursory and general, it brings a lovely camaraderie. True, if you just whip off a petition, "Lord, be with all the poor and needy," without any attempt to feel the miseries of the less fortunate, the sense of identification will be negligent. But if you specifically muse on the character and desire of one man you know, a Negro perhaps, whose son is denied the opportunity to which his latent ability entitles him, you will be drawn closer to him and he to you. You sense this experience in Kipling's verse:

> My brother kneels (so saith Kabir)
> To stone and brass in heathen-wise,
> But in my brother's voice I hear
> My own unanswered agonies.
> His God is as his Fates assign . . .
> His prayer is all the world's—and mine.

We who profess to be Christians should constantly remind ourselves that our religion asks for not just personal peace—it demands a social consciousness. It issues a challenge to create corporate righteousness. True, there is promise of the abundant life for the individual. But there is equal assurance that life will not be found until it is given in service. The abundant life is achieved as one loves one's neighbor as oneself and reveals that love in acts of good will.

Feodor Dostoievski says, "Every time you pray, if your prayer is sincere, there will be new feeling and new meaning in it—and you will understand that prayer is an education." This is especially so through the prayer of intercession. In this prayer we are exploring "the spiritual terrain of our individual and corporate existence under the guidance of the Spirit of God," as Professor Floyd Sampson put it. You are deepening your awareness of other men and growing in understanding of them.

One of the forms of intercessory prayer which Jesus asked us to engage in involves praying for our enemies. Few of us do it, and we thereby neglect one of the most effective means for bridging social chasms and easing tensions between men. A young man I knew was killed by Japanese artillery on a small island in the Pacific. For the bereft father the wave of hatred and antagonism against the Japanese was almost stronger than his feeling of sorrow. He called the Japanese "beasts," and once said we needed the Old Testament idea of destroying all of them—men, women, and children. I saw a hardness come into that man's face, a bitterness in all his reactions, which showed that the alienation was corroding his mind and soul.

Then came Hiroshima. Bit by bit the mosaic pattern of the horror of that event was felt by the father. He told me, "The idea finally got through that their tragedy and frailty

was no less than mine. I began to think again of a grandfather of mine who had gone to Japan as an educator. He had told the family that the Japanese were intelligent, gay, and among the most convivial people he had known. I thought of the maimed, crushed, burned, and sorrowing civilians of Hiroshima. One night just before going to sleep the thought kept forming in my mind, 'I hope God will forgive us all—Japanese and Americans—for the evil that has been done and the sorrow that has been created.' "

My friend went on to say, "The next morning it was as though I had walked from night into day. I had a freedom and clarity I hadn't known for months. I don't suppose I pray in the conventional sense. Perhaps I've never prayed. But that experience of the imagination, which is the most accurate way I can describe it, made me see that in the war there wasn't black and white. We all, friend and foe, were tainted with gray."

As I see it, that was prayer. It was one of the most fruitful forms of prayer—an entering into the heart of those who were called "enemies," and realizing that the fault in them was not alien to us. The agony that cauterizes our emotions does the same to them.

If you pray for the individual from whom you are estranged, or the race or nation with whom your society is at loggerheads, you create an atmosphere, both within your own consciousness and externally, that shifts the scale from friction to harmony. When the heads of the government of America, England, France, and Russia met in Geneva, in the summer of 1955, church bodies of the world called on their constituents to pray for the success of the conclave. Among the phrases in the several prayers were these: "Remove them from the limitations of fear and suspicion and endow them with the power of faith in one another. . . .

For the peoples they represent; for all those peoples who look to them in anxiety, yet in hope."

It is my considered belief that if those prayers were sincerely expressed by the people of the several nations involved, and the ideas they expressed were convictions, more progress would be made toward order and peace in the world than through a dozen signed treaties. An atmosphere of trust, a togetherness, would be established.

There need be no signed contract between a mother and her child as to how the one shall treat the other, or what percentage of the family larder shall be allocated between them. Only when there is abnormality and what we might call "an inhuman attitude" is it necessary for a court to prescribe what the conduct should be. Mutual concern and trust make for spontaneous fairness and justice. But in the larger human family we permit the abnormality. We too often accept conflict as natural. This is a sign of our ignorance, our limited vision. Mankind is one. It is this thought, and the affection of the heart, lifted to the level of perfect purpose, that make us see that it is so. Then, as we pray for all others, we realize there are no enemies beyond the fear and ignorance and error of our own hearts.

The act of petition is important as a step in prayer. The petitions, in the particular framework of our prayer for togetherness, will be for a more sympathetic heart, for truer understanding of human ills, for more wisdom in dealing with our differences, for an unwavering faith in the goodness of man, for greater skill in nurturing man's best potential, for a deeper dedication to the ways of serving mankind.

You will not be praying just for yourself. You will come to believe that "prayer as a means to effect a private end is

meanness and theft." Yours will not be a picayune petition like that of the fisherman:

> Lord, suffer me to catch a fish
> So large, that even I . . .
> In talking of it afterward
> Shall have no need to lie.

I am sure that it was this kind of prayer that prompted Professor Toy to make the sour remark, "Perhaps the nearest approach to prayer would be a sigh." I do not belittle sincere petition for God's help in meeting our human needs. But we need to see that the greatest personal gains to be won from prayer are spiritual and intellectual as well as physical. A friend told me of a schoolgirl who, losing a check that had been given her as a prize for outstanding achievement, was tearful and distraught. Her mother counseled her to search every square foot of the way she had come. The little girl, unknown to her mother, also prayed, asking God to help her find the prize. She soon returned home, radiant. The lost had been found. "Mother," she exclaimed, "I don't know why people don't pray. It doesn't take much time. You get so much for so little." I rather imagine you would agree with the little girl's statement. But I think we should also realize that following her mother's advice was most likely the means by which her prayer was answered.

A higher level of petition is that of the Bishop portrayed by H. G. Wells: ". . . forgive our little motives, take us and make us one with Thy great purpose . . . weave our lives into Thy struggle to . . . bring peace and union to the world." Sensing the greatness of God, before whom any selfish petition is out of keeping, is felt in a prayer of the Breton Mariners: "Help me, O God! My boat is so small, and Thy ocean so wide." In this instance, if the petitioner would

dwell more on the vastness of God's ocean and think not only of his little boat but of the boats of countless other fishermen —tradesmen, travelers, adventurers—all sailing the seven seas, his spirit would know deeper serenity for his own voyage. "O God, Thy ocean is so wide. Bless all who ride the waves. Give us all inner calm for the storm, patience for the outer calm, and kinship with each whose pathway is on the deep." That is a step up to a higher level of petition.

Pray, "help us," rather than, "help me," and already you are approaching the spirit of togetherness with all men.

Among the many conversations and wide correspondence that lie behind the thoughts in this volume, few personal testimonies have touched me more than one I share with you now. The woman from whom it comes has a sharp and analytical mind; and she is unusually mature in her thinking. Various hardships and sorrows have cut across the years of her life. The most recent blow had many tragic, unexpected, and poignant aspects. This is what she wrote:

"The time of my greatest sorrow was also the time of greatest questioning, soul searching and perhaps enlightenment. There is never a time of the day when it is very far from my thoughts. This is what it taught me.

"When I faced the unbearable I was given the power to bear it by the Grace of God. That Grace did not come to me through my own prayers, which were as futile as the fluttering of a bird that flies through a window and then tries to get out by banging its poor head against the ceiling. It came through the prayers, love, and sympathy of a great many people. I am speaking of spiritual strength, not of human companionship. We are all so afraid of adding to the pain of someone who has been hurt that we skim over the surface of life and seldom go deeper. Only those friends who had known tragedy in their own lives and a few who were brave

enough and strong enough spiritually to go down in the depths with me were able to help by being with me.

"But I was conscious of being strengthened and uplifted by a power that came from the prayers of all who knew . . ."

Have you ever thought what is the greatest gift you can give another person? Surely it isn't of a material nature. It is encouragement, hope, confidence, faith. It is truth and beauty and goodness which can heal the wounds of the heart. The most effective way is the one by which my friend was helped in her blackest hour. The way is that of prayer, which, before God, intercedes for another's need and then with humility and hope petitions for the grace to meet that need.

This leads us to the final step in prayer, the act of dedication. In this experience of prayer that seeks togetherness, you have stood in awe before the God and Father of all men. There has been a confession of the personal and corporate sin that envelops the human family. You have expressed thankfulness for the ties that bind you to people of the past, the present, and the future. Sensing common weaknesses and becoming more aware of specific needs of individuals, you have interceded for your fellow men. All of these elevations toward the altar of prayer have brought you closer to your fellows. While you have been in the deepest solitude, you know you are never alone.

Now you are ready to return to the work and noise of the world. But you want this experience to stay with you, for it is only completed as the vision is translated into life. Pause then and bow in dedication. Think of the words of John the Unafraid: "While every good wish is a prayer, every good deed is an answer to prayer."

Pause for a moment more, letting the thought of a mod-

ern businessman direct the attitude in this act of devotion. Prayer, he said, "is the spirit we infuse into our normal daytime lives. It is a matter of how much of the finest that is in us we are putting into all our human relationships. We must live our prayer, expressing it in practical fashion in our dealings with those around us, the members of our family, the people among whom we work, the grocer, the letter carrier, the corner newsboy."

You are committed to that intention. You have petitioned. But in the very articulation of that petition you are involved in the answer. You will go to the family that is deep in sorrow. Your prayer has given you facets of sympathy and wisdom you did not have before. Through your attitude their wounds will be healed.

The "enemy," who was he? The Russian? In your silent probing and reverent thoughts you realize that he has feelings that are not unknown to you. The hopes and loves and anxieties that are in your heart dwell in his. That also goes for the cantankerous individual in the office who has always rubbed you the wrong way. Pray for him too. Recall the sterility of his domestic life, the unfortunate influences of his boyhood. From the perspective of the highest wisdom, see that his irritableness is unworthy of your anger. Now, in dedication, go forth and let the insights you have gained be expressed in your life. Your prayer will be answered. What togetherness you have known in your aloneness will be revealed in social relationships.

There are one or two practical observations that may be helpful to you. First, it makes sense to engage in prayer regularly. We have seen that there is great need for finer relationships between individual and groups. So often there is a lack of social health. As you do not maintain your

physical well-being without a good diet and regularity in eating, so the analogy holds in cultivating right attitudes, thoughts, and actions toward your fellow men. Occasional and sporadic rumination about you and your God and your neighbor will do some good. But the value will be the same as a healthy meal eaten only once or twice a week. To really grow in togetherness through prayer, you will have to pray with regularity.

If you do not live with a family, set at least one time in every day when you will devote yourself to prayer. Select a time of fewest intrusions and when physically you are in repose. Think of that time before you come to it. Prepare yourself for it. You will find it a growing blessing to your aloneness.

Should you be a member of a family, bring the experience into the life of the group. A prayer before mealtime can be an occasion for "feeling our brother's needs." Children especially respond to the guidance you can give them. Teach the spirit of thankfulness and the spirit that "makes us conscious of the needs of others." Remember the prayer of Robert Burns:

> Some hae meat an canna eat,
> Some wad eat that want it . . .
> But we hae meat
> And we can eat,
> Sae the Lord be thankit.

Many families are enriched by a few verses read from the Bible before the prayer. A tone of reverence is established and the hearts of all will turn more readily to the God of all men. In that atmosphere pray for each other. Name the family members, asking for guidance to help them in the difficulty that is theirs. Then, sincerely and simply, let your

intercession and petition and dedication include the human family. Your mate, your child, and you yourself will feel a togetherness which that prayer alone can bring.

Then, when the family is abed, once again feel yourself a part of the vast tide of humanity. Contemplate the gladness and solemnity and hope that fill your consciousness and assure you that you are not alone.

Chapter 10

All Mankind Is with You

A friend of many years' standing tells me, "Whenever in my life I've needed someone, that someone has been there. When I was crippled with arthritis and the street I had to cross was icy, a laboring man in his workclothes gave me a hand. Once I was jammed down by an avalanche of personal and family troubles. I couldn't dig myself out. Helpers came from unexpected places. I found that what troubled me was shared by acquaintances as well as friends. Their *feeling with me* began to move the burden off."

I believe that is a universal experience. You do not live alone. Deep in the heart of your fellow men is an awareness of you, a responsiveness to you. One of the beautifully mysterious facts of life is this: when you feel deeply alone, at that time you can also feel closest to mankind.

We have seen that our deepest integration comes only through dealing with our aloneness. Yet the fulfillment of your unique selfhood comes about only when you have right relations with others. This seems to be a contradiction of

terms, but you can't create the truest picture of yourself without the consciousness of your solitude, and others must be on the canvas, too, to complete your portrait.

The feeling of aloneness and the longing for close relations with others hit me one Sunday morning at 9:24 A.M. I was in my study putting on cassock and gown while thinking of sermon notes and the many details for the service to begin in six minutes. Into the room burst two breathless girls, aged about ten. Their scrubbed faces were in a state of constant animation during our brief chat. They came right to the point:

"Do you think you could make us sisters? Oh, please do, if you can!"

Among many unusual requests, this was a new one. I said, "This is a very interesting request. Tell me more about it. Why do you want to be made sisters?"

"Well, you see"—one spoke and then the other and then they were speaking together—"we live near each other. We like each other so much, we'd love to be together all the time —and just have the feeling, you know, that we really belonged to each other, that we were sort of—one family."

"That's a lovely thought. But what makes you think I could make you sisters?"

"We weren't sure. But we thought maybe people like missionaries or you, who marry people, could make them brothers or sisters too."

"Girls, I'm sorry I can't do that in the way you may be thinking about it. I can't say some words and then give you a paper with a seal on it that says you are sisters. But I can tell you this: if you really love each other and care for each other, I believe you can truly say, 'We are sisters.' Love and kindness and caring for each other make a family. Jesus taught us that when we believed like another person, helped

that person, loved that person, we had a brother or a sister. In that way I believe it's true—you have made yourselves sisters to each other."

Eyes sparkling, hands joined, they dashed for their Sunday school class as I ran to catch the choir as it was entering the nave. Those children spontaneously revealed what we adults try to hide from ourselves and others. You and I want the sense of closeness to selected individuals. Our need for relationship, of belonging, is strong.

Shortly after this experience one of our choirs, made up of kindergarten and first-grade children, sang in a church service. As I watched the youngsters, I saw personal self-consciousness in them all. Though they were a group and aware of participation in their singing, yet each child was aware of himself. Many looked for a familiar face in the congregation. More than one solemn countenance broke into a smile as Father or Mother or Grandmother was seen among the worshipers. Emily Hanson Obear penned lines that record the charm of that moment, together with the scene at the close of the worship hour:

> Angels sang for us today
> Some tinier than others;
> After Church they found their way
> Right to their fathers and mothers.

The heart of all mankind reaches out to enfold you as truly as parental arms closed around those budding songsters on a Sunday morning. You are never alone because the hopes and fears, the affections and concerns, of the human family are with you. In prayer you grow in a sense of togetherness as your concern reaches out to encompass others. But in your sorrow, in your deepest belief, in your acts of service, in the

very fact of your existence, you can know the concern of many, many people which envelops you.

It is always delightful to see how affection between individuals transcends age and station. You feel it in yourself in the presence of a baby or a little child. The helplessness there fills you with tenderness. The recollection of your own childhood and youth helps you to recognize the needs of that youngster. A friend, past eighty-five years of age, writes of a visit with a child, aged one and a half years: "She was interested in my chain and glasses, and was not disturbed when I discouraged her. After that hour's visit I count her among my best friends." That little child may not have been aware of it, but the love and concern of the older woman was with her.

Notes for this book have been made over many months and in various places. Before me is a letterhead of *Hotel Hassler, Trinita dei Monti, Roma.* Scrawled in a hand that only I can read are the words, "in Chapter on Mankind with You—use the child's prayer, 'Help me to do right even when no one else is looking.'

"It can't really be done. The assumption that we are so alone that no one else is looking is wrong.

"Man is the living pinpoint of the ages, the apex of the growing pyramid of time—the living link between the dead and the unborn. All of the past is with him, in the tissues of his body, the frailties of his flesh—the aspirations of his heart. It is so for every human being.

"There is a deep and unbreakable link between us all. Remember John Donne's idea—a clod does not wash into the sea without lessening the mainland—every man's death diminishes me.

"Perhaps the truer expression of the prayer would be, 'Help me to do right *because* everyone else is always looking.'

We are bound to mankind and mankind to us—and we can't escape that *sobering, solemn, yet comforting fact.*"

I recall that those sentiments seemed valid as I walked across the street from the Hotel Hassler and down the famous Scala di Spagna to Via Condotti. The smiles of young people, the greeting of a flower seller at the base of the famous steps, the conversation with a shopkeeper who asked me to give greetings to a cousin living in the Bronx, all conspired to deepen the assurance that I was not alone.

It is the way of spiritual health to feel the tides of interest and affection that flow from others toward you and to respond. "The sense of separation is hell." To the degree you build up walls of isolation and narrow the circle of communication with others, to that degree you move toward mental illness. The sense of complete separation, it has been said, is insanity. Visiting mental hospitals and seeing seriously ill patients, I have felt the reasonableness of this statement. A number of patients may be in one room, but there is no reciprocity of interest. I have seen each of them wrapped in the bleak shadows of his intense isolation. They are not able to sense the concern of the physicians, nurses, technicians. There is a barrier raised against their own healing—a wall that keeps out the solicitude and help of their fellow men. They are incapable of knowing or feeling that mankind is with them.

We guard against that illness as we have a healthy awareness of our relatedness to one another and as we are appreciative of and responsive to the interest and concern of others. This awareness can exist in group as well as individual relations. Louise Rich tells of the day her husband suddenly died. "The early northern winter night had already fallen. I was alone, deep in the Maine woods, and the blackness that crept down from the ridges into the narrow valley now seemed

cold and hostile. I didn't know how I was going to get through the long hours of darkness ahead. I had loved Ralph with all my heart, and now he was gone.

"Then my other neighbor came two long miles in the bleak cold and sat with me, doing nothing, saying nothing, attempting no futile gestures of impossible comfort, but simply, with infinite wisdom, being *there*." This experience led her to affirm that what she knew of God had been found in the lives of ordinary people who had helped her when she desperately needed help. I am sure we have all felt that universal response. It may have come in the care and helpfulness of an individual, but we know what is expressed in that one life is latent in all lives.

There are occasions in group experience when the similarity of all men is vivid. In musing on the French Revolution, one writer asked:

"Hast thou considered how each man's heart is so tremulously responsive to the hearts of all men; hast thou noted how omnipotent is the very sound of many men? How their shriek of indignation palsies the strong-soul; their howl of contumely withers with unfelt pangs? . . . Great is the combined voice of men; the utterance of their instincts, which are truer than their thoughts: it is the greatest a man encounters, among the sounds and shadows which make up this World of Time."

In the role you play in life there is a common concern for you. You may neglect it or fail to cultivate it. By your hardness and indifference you may come to feel it is not there. But you are wrong. You are one with all and all are one with you.

In three avenues of experience this fact of life is especially vivid. One of those is in the area of your deepest, strongest

beliefs. I am not thinking of the limited and circumscribed areas of your particular religious creed or the social beliefs of the race or nation of which you are a part. Rather, I am asking you to consider those convictions of your heart which cause you to go on living. I am confident that there is a conviction within you that life was intended for happiness; that man, with all his faults, is more good than bad; that despite the chasms that seem to divide us, we human beings are pretty much the same; that the future is more important than the past; that love and kindness, courage and patience, are precious; that faith and hope and positive thinking are essential ingredients to successful living; that we ought to live without war and that the day will come when mankind will achieve harmony, order, and peace in international affairs—political, economic, and social; that the spirit of good will and appreciation for each other will lead in time to a sense of community; that the "human race" is destined to become more of a "human family," not in word but in fact.

You may question some of these statements at first and say, "No, I really don't believe that." But think about them for a time, and while you may not use such words, I believe you will realize that the spirit of such beliefs lies deep within you. The fascinating thing is this: Others believe it and this is an opportunity to experience a feeling of togetherness—others are thinking as you think, believing as you most deeply believe.

Eleanor Roosevelt wrote to me, "I am afraid I am one of the fortunate people who have so far never really felt alone." I can understand that. Mrs. Roosevelt has lived by broad ideas and a sensitivity to the needs of her fellow men. She has devoted time and energy and concern to helping the oppressed, furthering causes that make for equity in human relations, upholding principles by which a greater degree of

order can come into our international affairs. Such a person doesn't sense a lonely isolation. She feels the heart of humanity with her. Wherever she goes there is oneness with the truest sensibilities in other sincere and honest people.

Noble friendships flower as you look upward and outward together at common needs and mutual goals. Articulate your deepest beliefs in words and acts and you will know that you are never alone. In the most unexpected places you will feel the hearts of other people in accord with yours.

This is illustrated by an incident during the presidency of Mr. Truman, on the occasion of the one hundredth anniversary of the Battle of Chapultepec. In Mexico, where a cluster of gallant Mexican cadets had defended Chapultepec to the last man, Mr. Truman laid a wreath and spoke a few words of appreciation for the loyalty and heroism represented by those young men of a century ago.

I am sure that more good was done that day to further friendship between our countries than through a dozen treaties or many gifts. For a hundred years the Mexican people cherished the memory of the defenders of Chapultepec. There was an identification in every patriot with the selflessness and courage of those who gave their lives trying to stop the Americans' advance against Mexico City. Now the country that conquered in the war but could not subdue the victory of the spirit at Chapultepec, said, by the presence of its leader, "We admire such heroism too. We are grateful *with* you. The devotion and courage shown here inspire us." We are not different; what touches one touches all.

Professor Riesman sees the middle-class urbanite in America today as a lonely member of the crowd because he never comes really close to others or to himself. This is a pathetic commentary on the aridity of our personal sensitiveness and social cultivation. There are limitless adventures in friend-

ship that await the individual who will search within his own heart for the things he most values. As these are expressed it is like the magnetic pole toward which all compasses turn. The deepest feeling and thinking of others will be directed in the same way. Peace and strength come from that rich relationship.

I'd like to tell you of a few personal experiences to remind you of your own and to prompt you to have more of them.

Once our family was transporting the paraphernalia of the summer vacation back for the long stretch of fall and winter. The car was jammed with clothing, collections of stones, pressed wild flowers, tricycles, and innumerable items which "we might have a use for," but which would collect dust for the next ten months. One child held the puppy. Another was charged with responsibility for three goldfish, swimming in a small amount of water. The latter we were sure had been properly battened down for the twenty-mile trek that still lay ahead of us. Suddenly the car hit a bump. The puppy jumped at the wrong time and in the wrong direction. The goldfish bowl was upset. The carefully devised top flew off. Water and goldfish sloshed over the bag of pine cones and the rock collection. We were close to *Tod's Bar and Grill,* wherein was our one hope of salvation for the goldfish. Pious old-timers had made vague comments at "the goings-on come Saturday night at Tod's place," and had implied that the proprietor was an irresponsible so-and-so.

Wondering if Tod would have such an item as plain water in stock, I opened the door for an excited child with goldfish flopping in an empty bowl. Bright blue eyes and a smile that crinkled over a happy face greeted us. "It's lucky your accident happened right here. You've come to the world's best goldfish doctor." After giving the needed water of life to the gasping fish, he took us into the back rooms where he

lived. Books were on the table. The walls were colorful and the shelves were tidy. He went to an aquarium by a window, dipped out a fish, and added it to the revived trio. "Now that fella is called Henry. He's a mighty steady chap. I've felt at times he needed a change . . . you know, a little more adventure in his life. Now, if you'll let him go along with you, I think he'll help quiet your friends. And you'll be doing a mighty nice thing for Henry." I saw the little girl's face change from fear and consternation to radiant joy. As for Tod and myself, there was no sense of artificial barriers between us as a tavern keeper and a clergyman. We were a couple of human beings. We were together.

Not long ago I was in Egypt. All day long I watched the poor peasants from the train window, as we rode from Cairo to Luxor. The scene was repeated thousands of times: Men and women, knee deep in the muck of irrigation canals, digging out the silt with their bare hands. Animals and people working and eating and sleeping together. Reaping with the same crude instruments used in the days of the Pharaohs. Thousands of donkeys and water buffalo and camels counted in the long hours. But only one tractor. I thought of the thwarted lives and of the long workday for a wage that was equivalent to the cost of a loaf of bread in America. Here was one of the highest infant mortality rates in the world. My heart was sick. What could possibly be done? The anticipated visit to the Valley of the Kings, to the Temples of Karnak and Luxor, faded before the feeling of depression and the thought that the improvement of the Egyptian farmer should be a major concern.

In Luxor I found a kindred conviction. There was no casual indifference. American archaeologists, missionaries, and educators from a half-dozen nations had the same concern which was budding in my consciousness. Natives of

Egypt, exposed to higher levels by education, were concerned with land reform, health measures, and a program of education that would give the depressed fellahin a place in the sun. Mine was no single voice crying in the wilderness; it was but a feeble whisper. But I knew that the growing number of voices will, in time, change the conditions in the valley of the Nile.

Some years earlier I attended an international conference in Switzerland. For three weeks a group of about fifty men from twenty-five different nations lived together at a chateau which overlooked tranquil Lake Geneva and snow-crowned Mont Blanc in the distance. Divergences were many when we discussed theology, world problems, and church policies and practices. But when we recited the Lord's Prayer, at hours of worship, in twenty different languages, there was togetherness. In the early hours of morning, when the rough edges of some controversial question had been diminished by long debate and physical weariness, there were occasions when a man would say, "Well, above all else, this is what I most deeply believe." What he affirmed, though he was Greek or Indian, French or South American, I would find echoing in my own heart.

What we think may differ. The various heritages in which we have been nurtured produce these various slants on life. Yet what we believe as human beings—our deepest faiths, our most unassailable hopes, our trust in truth and love and kindness, our appreciation of beauty, our response to sincerity and goodness and selflessness—keep us from ever being alone. Express these ideas and you will find all mankind is with you. Listen and you will hear others say what is in your heart.

The awareness of mankind's oneness with you is felt in your hours of hardship, suffering, sorrow. A verse in the book

of Ecclesiastes reads, ". . . woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up." The truth of life is that each man has every man standing by, moved with sympathy, desiring to help him up when he falls. Laughter can sometimes separate us. But tears unite us. The majority of our "jokes" make fun of some foible or weakness and can often hurt and alienate. But there is a powerful and universal response that is automatically present when there is pain or tragedy. No alienation then. You sense this when there is an accident. Immediately there are people about responding, helping.

Friends of ours lost a young daughter. The most competent surgeons could not repair the damage of an insidious tumor on the brain. To our letter of sympathy came a reply with these sentences in it: "We have been overwhelmed with kindness from every side. . . . We never knew people could be so wonderful." It says what thousands have said: "The heart of mankind was with me in my desperate hour and gave me strength to carry on." I will never forget the comment of an acquaintance who put it this way, "I didn't know how loving people were until I buried the one I loved most."

Perhaps you have not experienced this in your own life, but you sense its truth and validity. Look at the history of great and good men. Do you not find your heart moved by their sorrow, reaching out to them in the courageous way they met tragedy? There may be teachings of Jesus that puzzle you; some you may prefer not to hear. You may close off channels of responding friendship with Him in this area. But look at Him toward the last of His life. Forget for a moment the things He may have said that trouble you. Look at what He faces. See what He does in the presence of defeat and under the agonizing burden of suffering. Before misunderstanding and irrational anger there is majestic silence.

The excruciating awareness of physical pain is kept secondary to His concern for His fellow men: "Son, behold thy mother." "Forgive them, they know not what they do." Feel the noble commitment to the ways of the mind and the spirit, which will not be subdued by the cruelest indignities to the body: "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit." Stand there at Calvary, feel His suffering, and your heart is touched at the dignity of the spirit you see.

That innate capacity within you is within all men. Others will feel it from you as they go through their dark moments. And you may know that blessed reciprocity. Should life lay on you some tragedy, you will not be crushed to the ground. Hands and hearts of others will support you and help bear the burden. All mankind will be with you. You will not be alone.

I have made a special point in consulting many people of advanced age for their reactions to loneliness. What they say adds to the validity of many years' experience and judgment. One woman of ninety-five recently lost the last member of her family. All ties of physical kinship were broken. She told me that she knew what it was to be lonesome. Yet she went on to say, "That isn't the thing that stands out. What is important is that at the times when I should have been most lonesome, I felt the widest circle of love and concern from friends and acquaintances. The times I've been most subject to the folly of loneliness were when everything seemed to be going well. But when I faced personal loss and difficulty I was least alone. The tender sharing of others didn't take my sorrow away, but it inspired me to meet it worthily, because I knew they were with me."

In hoarding life you lose it, but in giving your life away in service to others you find it. As you draw into the shell

of personal concerns and fears, you increasingly isolate yourself from your fellow men. This may be "existing." But it is not "living." Life involves awareness of what is about us as well as what is within us. Life means having both an inlet and an outlet, like the fresh water of the Sea of Galilee. With only the intake and no outgiving, man becomes a Dead Sea where nothing can live.

When you give the needs and concerns of others supremacy over your own instinctive concern for self-preservation, you release constructive power into the world. You walk farther and farther in the experience of togetherness. Your life is expanded not just by the service you do for others, but also by *what that service brings back to you.* Give love and you will be loved. Help and you are surrounded with helpfulness. Follow the impulse to be outgoing toward your fellow men and your fellow men are with you wherever you go.

This way of living begins with the first step toward awareness of the needs of your fellow men. "I wept because I had no shoes," goes the self-centered strain, "until I met a man who had no feet." All about you are individuals who have an area of need. See that need. Respond to it and you begin the magic circle that finds and completes yourself.

It is easy to fall in either one of the two categories mentioned by Nietzsche: "One goeth to his neighbor because he seeketh himself, and the other because he would fain lose himself. Your bad love to yourselves maketh solitude a prison to you." You should not begin this venture of helpfulness for either of those reasons. Your motive should be only a desire to help another in his need.

Lewis Mumford has noted that talking about good will can be done by those who express it least. "To make ourselves capable of loving . . . is the paramount problem of integration." You won't do much talking about it. Rather in your

aloneness you will come to know the real person you are—a sincere person, who wants to be useful and helpful, who responds to life's fundamental and simple things: kindness and loyalty and appreciation. In that aloneness you will think of individuals to whom that goodness in you would mean much. Then as you take the initiative in translating your understanding into action, *you make yourself capable of loving.* You perform an act of selfless affection, and you find yourself surrounded by the good will of others. This in turn prompts an even greater capacity for helpfulness and a fuller integration.

Many people find this to be true if they are a part of an institution or a cause that is devoted to humanitarian ends. Some time ago a chapter of the American Red Cross used in publicity this thought: "Membership in the Red Cross is assurance that no matter what happens in this uneasy world, you are not alone. Working with you, serving with you—and for you—are millions of your neighbors." The statement continued, "You join a fellowship dedicated to the relief of human suffering. Your effort—your contribution—no matter what its extent, becomes a great, meaningful force because it is strengthened and supported by many others who also join and serve."

You have seen an analogy to this in watching tiny streamlets of water that run across sloping ground near a creek during a rain. Some drops get caught by minute obstructions and stop. Eventually they sink one by one into the earth. They play their part in the needs of nature. But others merge together. They run down a little channel that finds the stream. They become part of a great flow that will not stop till it empties into the wide ocean.

So it is for you as you direct the energy of your life in a cause of service. Share your affections and your resources in

a program of Christian service and you find you are standing close to many others like yourself. Work for world peace, believe in and follow those banners which spell justice, opportunity, freedom, and you will find yourself marching with an army of high-minded and fine-souled people. You are not alone.

In his book on *How to Keep a Sound Mind,* John J. B. Morgan warns against an overconcern with your own moods, feelings, concerns. It surely is true that just feeling your own emotional and mental pulse can thwart your spiritual health. Dr. Morgan's prescription is threefold. First, set objective goals for yourself and minimize your subjective feelings as you work toward them. Second, use your reason. If things don't come off, ask yourself why you failed. But more important, ask yourself how you can improve tomorrow. His third element is, *Live for others.*

That prescription is heartily endorsed here. I attest that it makes your aloneness a fine and wholesome thing. Be objective. Be positive. Live for others. Follow the regime and you will find that health of mind and spirit is yours. You will be practicing one of the secrets that enables man to transcend his loneliness and to know a supporting closeness from the heart of all mankind.

It is fitting that something be said about the need to maintain faith in this point of view. You will run across individuals who will discourage you in this belief. Through their eyes you may think you see the human race as insensitive and unworthy. I remember traveling for a brief time in the company of a man who had an antipathy toward the French. He found that they were shallow, selfish, materialistic. He recounted many incidents—unscrupulous taxi drivers attempted to double the fare; callous customs officials tried to steal items

from one's luggage; shallow women abounded and men ran them a close second.

Another man I knew had a different point of view. The French were to him highly civilized. He found in them a high degree of sensitivity and warmth. More accurately I think we should say his point of view sharpened his awareness of the qualities he believed he would find. A peasant journeying from one village to another became to my friend an authority on the nurture of a particularly fine grape. A salesgirl, by his attitude, showed herself to be a self-possessed and charming lady. Minor officials straightened their shoulders and beamed with pride as he praised their country and expressed appreciation for their customs and heritage. The chef in a tiny restaurant prepared the most savory dishes in the world because my friend told him and his fellow diners that it would be so.

As you hold faith in the responsiveness and goodness of your fellow men, you create the conditions for that faith to become a living force. Believe that men will respond to your concern and they will. Think that you are isolated and that your possible efforts of helpfulness will count for nothing and you will produce nothing. What you seek you will find. What you believe you will see verified.

It is wise to take a hopeful, positive viewpoint and hold to it. In Machiavelli's classic book, *On the Art of War,* he emphasizes two factors that make for success in military struggle. One, he says, is the battle. Then, analyzing what makes for success in this engagement, he comes to the determining factor of discipline. "Good order," he wrote, "makes man bold . . . Few men are brave by nature, but discipline makes them so." You can have at a given moment a high concept of the responsiveness of man, but unless you keep strengthening that belief, you may find it torn apart by a discour-

aging incident. Keep believing it. Encourage yourself to make it stronger within your consciousness. Discipline and strengthen yourself in it daily by saying, "I will let this attitude of confidence in my fellow men be expressed today in what I say and do."

Marjorie Roulston is thinking along this same line when she says that the integration in life we all want "doesn't just happen. It comes from studying what is lacking in one's life —and then going out and getting it."

Too many people lack a sense of relatedness to their fellow men. Perhaps you yourself have not known the comfort and support to your aloneness that can come through the conviction that the heart of mankind is with you. But you need that awareness, for it will hallow your aloneness. It will take conscious effort and a persistent faith; but if you engage in the discipline of expressing your truest beliefs, appreciate the loving concern of your fellow men when you face personal tragedy, performing acts of selfless service, you will be well on the way to achieving it. A great deal of the petulance, prejudice, and self-centeredness that encumbers your life will fall away. You will have a fuller life, for you will discover that you have friends everywhere. All mankind is with you.

Chapter 11

On Becoming Happy with Yourself

You can achieve this world's goods. You can reach the goals on the materialistic level which you set for yourself. You can fulfill your instinctive desires for food, shelter, sex, family. *But unless you like yourself you have missed the first hurdle in the race of life.*

You may want to do something useful in this world. You may make blueprints for the way others should live their lives. You may prepare large-scaled schemes for the ordering of society. But unless you have made of yourself a person you like to be with, you have failed in the vital area that affords you the chance to make this a more desirable world.

We sometimes wonder what our responsibility is. How far should our energies and concerns be extended? Amid a thousand questions which you can raise, there stands this one portentous fact: *you are responsible for yourself.* If you don't make, in your aloneness, a self you like to live with, by what right do you assume to improve the world?

I have mentioned that this book formed itself over many

months and in various places. Many suggestions, accumulated over a long time, were discarded as I came to the outline and final writing. But I kept in the folder for this chapter some thoughts written down one evening in the ancient city of Damascus, Syria. The hours immediately preceding had been spent in the company of a guide and a representative of the police department. The latter carefully laid down the rules: no photographing of natives; certain ancient sites could not be visited; all military installations were forbidden. He was conspicuously present as we visited the jail where the Apostle Paul had been incarcerated and as we browsed in shops. In an atmosphere of tension there would be no incident prompted by ourselves or natives.

Later in the evening I wrote down:

"*Fact 1.* In the oldest inhabited city in the world there is suspicion and fear among men. Here is illustrated the fact that with great scientific progress we have not kept pace in the field of human relationships. We fly around the world in less time than it took George Washington to travel from Mount Vernon to New York City. Yet we have made no improvement on his integrity. Some of Aristotle's theories on astronomy, physics, and chemical processes have gone by the boards. But his ethics are still unachieved goals. The cosmology of Jesus' day, which saw the earth as flat, with a dark subterranean cavern named Sheol underneath the surface, is among the discarded impressions of truth that litter the past. But the principles of Jesus concerning the art of living have not been realized. On this level He is far ahead of us.

"*Question:* How can progress in human relationships be realized? By preaching and teaching? Revolutions and bold blueprints for the remaking of society? Crusades that will conquer the "bad and the ignorant" and enthrone in their stead "the good and the wise"? These may help in varying

degrees. But the human race has known preaching and revolting and crusading for centuries—and the moves forward have often been infinitesimal and sometimes have been backward. At times the seemingly good and wise ones have left things worse than they were before.

"Fact 2. The one area where there is no uncertainty is with the solitary personality. Human relationships will improve only as there are improved human beings. There can be no better world until there are better individuals. 'No matter how you mix or cook it you can't make a good omelet with bad eggs.'

"Fact 3. The way to improve the world is to improve yourself. The basic contribution man can make to the human family is to become himself a more integrated, confident, wiser person. Such a person is a happy one. He can contribute because he has first made a success of himself."

That same line of thinking is found in one of the greatest addresses given before an American audience. The speaker was Thomas H. Huxley; the place was Johns Hopkins University; the year was 1876. Mr. Huxley said he was not impressed with our material achievements. With prophetic insight he foresaw our domestic and international dilemmas. "You and your descendants have to ascertain whether this great mass will hold together under the forms of a republic, [when] . . . population thickens in your great cities, . . . and communism and socialism will claim to be heard." Then comes this powerful sentence: *"The one great condition of success, your sole safeguard, is the moral worth and intellectual clearness of the individual citizen."*

That is true of a family. It is true for the nation. It is true for the world. A family falls apart unless there are individuals who are responsible, loyal to duty, conscious of each other, willing to adjust, of moral worth, and endowed with intel-

lectual clarity. A nation disintegrates too, unless it has people like that. To the degree we have more or less of such individuals in the world the human family goes forward or regresses.

That is the keynote of this closing chapter. There is a complementing fact which is just as valid: we don't become worthwhile members of the human family until we come to terms with ourselves. We can't be happy with life and our fellow men until we have first achieved happiness with ourselves. This Thoreau saw as he affirmed, "As long as a man stands in his own way, everything seems to be in his way." We cannot heal our fellows until we have fulfilled the injunction: "Physician, heal thyself." We cannot assuage the fears and frustrations in others until we have conquered them in our own soul. Else we shall be as the blind leading the blind.

The happiness of which we are speaking is not altogether conditioned by externals. Granted that the majority of men will be unhappy without food, shelter, health, useful work, and the sense of being respected by their peers. But the description of the happy man by Bertrand Russell as one "who lives objectively, who has free affection and wide interests, who secures his happiness through these interests and affections and through the fact that they, in turn, make him an object of interest and affection to many others," suggests that the interior aspect is more important than the exterior. So too with William Wordsworth's picture of the happy man. As you read again lines from "The Happy Warrior," see how the sources for his well-being come from what happens within rather than without. Not what the world does to him —but what he has done with himself!

> Who is the happy Warrior? . . .
> It is the generous Spirit, who, when brought

Among the tasks of real life, hath wrought
Upon the plan that pleased his boyish thought:
Whose high endeavors are an inward light
That makes the path before him always bright:
Who, with a natural instinct to discern
What knowledge can perform, is diligent to learn;
Abides by this resolve, and stops not there,
But makes his moral being his prime care . . .

Jules Payot, former rector of Aix-Marseilles University, is author of a volume entitled *The Conquest of Happiness.* Written just after the first world war, when France faced hard disruptions and adjustments, the volume breathes the air of universal truth. Mr. Payot saw for his day, and for ours too, that "happiness lies in serenity, in the simple life, and in work which keeps our body and our intelligence healthy; in real rest, which consists of living in keeping with the great laws of life; in a sweet, calm, and undisturbed life graced with the joys of friendship and family; in vivifying contact with nature; in the charms of art, literature, history, philosophy, and science." Some of these items may be placed in the category of "externals," but Jules Payot sees that "base subservience to money, ambition, and vanity renders happiness impossible. It can be found only in the mind and in the energy and effort that purify the mind."

Accepting as true that happiness is not determined by externals but results from cultivation of the mind and spirit, let's ask if it's possible to be happy. Isn't man doomed, by his imperfections and his imperfect world, to a continuing state of unhappiness? The poor, overworked word "happiness" is a catch-all for a thousand-and-one conditions and states. A definition, for our specific context, is in order. I think it could be put this way: *happiness is a state of animated contentment with oneself.* Howard Mumford Jones

states that "eighteenth-century man (who put in our state document 'the pursuit of happiness') did not mean by happiness that wholly emotional and transient euphoria connoted by wedding parties, love affairs, skiing, and the endless pursuit of thrills. They had in mind not so much happiness as contentment; and if their concept of content was to our taste overly colored with a melancholy resignation, there is no essential logic whereby the doctrine of contentment has to be gray. It may be that Jefferson was wiser than are we, and that to rest content with limited, yet not unsatisfactory, opportunities and powers is the highest felicity an individual or a nation can achieve in an indifferent universe."

But accepting our definition, is it possible to know a sense of vital contentment? Can a man achieve happiness with himself? I know that you can. It will be qualitative. You will have to work for it. It will seem within your grasp today, and tomorrow it will appear to be gone. But over the long sweep of years, desiring to gain it and striving for it, one can attain it.

There must be desire and there must be will. It is one of the most pivotal and intriguing facts of life that the world outside is relative to ourselves—there is no happiness found, no continents discovered, no knowledge gained, no wisdom achieved, unless the desire is first in our own soul. The range of sensitivity to vibration in your ear determines what sounds you will hear. Your dog responds to sounds that do not exist for you. In like manner it is the desire of the soul that determines what, in the world, registers on you. Desire to achieve contentment with yourself, really desire it—until it becomes a "magnificent obsession"—and hundreds of different tendencies, interests, attitudes that pull you in one direction and then another, begin to orient themselves around that pivotal desire. They further rather than hamper it.

Then you sense a change taking place in the outer world. It forms colors and creates tones that are harmonious to your desire. Marcus Aurelius spoke the truth when he exclaimed, "Whatever exists now is, in a way, the germ of what must come out of it. The subsequent belongs to the family of the antecedent." You can't sincerely desire to be a happy man in the high sense we have been trying to portray—a man who finds contentment using the wealth of his own soul for the good of his fellow men—without finding that the seed of desire is growing into a healthy tree.

Anywhere you look in the biography of men you see this truth verified. Epictetus, Pascal, Marcus Aurelius, Francis of Sales, Albert Schweitzer, and a vast host of others turned their inner desire toward the light of truth. And they found truth. It became their joy and their peace. Having the desire, they were made aware of the powers of cause and effect. Wisdom was given to channel the passions and to direct and discipline their energies. Their strong desire became their amulet for success. Both Socrates and Augustine wrote that in their youth they were misguided by evil instincts. Like countless others they might have gone down the path of mediocrity and oblivion following the signs marked, "Transient Pleasure," "Futility," "Indifference," "Self-centeredness." What made them turn from this way? They strongly desired a deeper satisfaction with themselves than was offered in the way they were going. Nothing in the world can resist strong resolution. Both powers within and powers without unite to crown any resolute decision with the laurel of victory.

I do not mean to imply that this happens like the magic of the Arabian Nights, where, by simply rubbing a lamp or pronouncing the magic words, caverns of jewels or flying carpets are put at your disposal. That is wishing. And *wishing*

is different from *desiring*. Wishing longs for happiness and lolls in the hammock fretfully waiting for it to fall from the sky. Desiring says, "I must have happiness and I will," and then it rolls up its sleeves to clear a path toward the goal.

One of the greatest geniuses of the ages was Leonardo da Vinci. "Leonardo, the Magnificent," he was called. The imprint of his immortal hand is left on the fields of painting, sculpture, architecture, engineering, and science. If you believe that one so rarely gifted must have created easily, you are wrong. This is his testimony: "O, Lord, thou sellest to us all gifts at the price of effort." But, as one can see in the life of Leonardo, when the trinity of desire, will, and effort is strong, he has the price for any gift he may conceive.

That desire and will and the impulse to do are formed in a man's aloneness. Thoreau almost made a fetish of long and isolated withdrawals from society—a practice you may not be able to follow or find necessary. But you will find some cultivation of your aloneness a stern necessity, for only then can you direct your hopes, form your desires, and mold your will. For you Thoreau's testimony, "I find it wholesome to be alone the greater part of the time," may not be valid. But I believe his experience is also yours that "to be in company, even with the best, is soon wearisome and dissipating." You and I will do well to know the experience that led Thoreau to add, "I never found a companion that was so companionable as solitude."

Dwelling with yourself grants you the occasion to learn who you are and to shape the dream of the person you aspire to be. In the circles of society the comment is sometimes sharply made, "Just who do you think you are?" The jabbing question is usually directed toward the one who may show signs of being unconventional. It is a whip to bring the maverick into line with the movement of the herd. But who

can answer that question: "Who am I?" Only the man who has dwelt within himself. Emerson may be right that "Columbus discovered no isle or key so lonely as himself." But Columbus did discover himself. Lonely at times, yes—but he was a contented man, for in aloneness he dreamed and willed and worked to permit his unique self to do what it was meant to do.

Certain specific needs may vary among us, but there are some basic elements that must exist in the soul of a man who will achieve happiness, contentment. As I see it, each one must be developed in aloneness.

First is *belief*—belief in life's good possibilities; belief that the highest excellencies are to be found through the mind and the spirit; belief in the law of cause and effect, "as a man sows so shall he reap."

Others may stimulate you to believe. Observation of life may provide experiences out of which belief may grow. But the force by which the soul is lifted and the world is moved is produced only when a man says, in his aloneness, "This *I* believe."

Shortly after the second world war I was privileged to have lunch with members of the family of the late John Oman in the home where he lived during his residency at the University of Cambridge. It was a simple house. The lunch was unusual for those postwar days. Carefully hoarded eggs and a crisp green salad, made from vegetables that came from the garden just outside the dining windows, made up the menu. Furniture coverings and wallpaper were faded; the carpeting was worn. But the indifference to all this, the book-filled rooms, and the tiny fire in the grate laughing at the drizzly day made the spirit of John Oman very real to me.

John Oman had been a fellow of Jesus College and a

former principal of Westminster College, Cambridge, and author of a number of books, read primarily by theologians. Among the titles were *Grace and Personality* and *Vision and Authority*. I had read those and other volumes and found his ideas presented with appealing cogency. There was communicated throughout the pages a delightful personality, a man of discriminating and strong belief. I wondered if the secret to this fine mind and personality might not lie in the fact that John Oman was a man who had come to agreeable terms with himself.

In his home, I discovered this to be true. He was a man who could take life's vicissitudes in stride because he first had successfully managed himself. His home and family verified it: John Oman had become skilled in the art of being happy with himself.

In his writings he analyzed three sources which men see as forming life for better or for worse:

1. Environment
2. Events and actions
3. Beliefs

Some contend that we are controlled by where we are, our heredity and the mores of our society making us puppets. Others contend that man is subject to circumstances and events. We can't control storms of nature, the wars of men, or the caprice of fate. Rather, they control us. Mr. Oman rejected these materialistic and naturalistic points of view. He advanced his own conviction that it was what a man inwardly believed that determined the world in which he lived. Real conviction not only directed man's actions; it changed actions, events, and beliefs in the world. The finest testimony to the truth of his argument was John Oman

himself—a man whose inner beliefs made him content with himself.

Believe that life is good. Center your concerns on the values of the mind and the spirit and you will achieve the highest good. All history confirms this. Who are those who are at greatest peace with themselves? The saints, philosophers, and teachers who lived by the mind and spirit. Jesus lived by radiant beliefs, having an indomitable faith in the goodness of man and an unshakable trust in God. The years of His life on one level are marked by misunderstanding, failure, frustration. He appears to complete the ultimate role of tragedy as He dies on the cross. Yet He leaves the imprint of a triumphant life. Was He a happy man? This is His repeated testimony: "My joy no man taketh from me."

Wherever you look, you see that inner belief determines both outer influence and the blessing of a vital contentment. Those who believed, whose lives were directed by the ageless currents of the mind and the spirit, walk into immortality, gracing the future with their achievements. And what vital contentment must have been theirs!

An awareness of this must have prompted Thomas Huxley to write in a letter of Charles Kingsley, ". . . the longer I live, the more obvious it is to me that the most sacred act of a man's life is to say and to feel, 'I believe such and such to be true.' All the greatest rewards and all the heaviest penalties of existence cling about that act."

But how does one believe? By seeing and by believing! There is enough evidence in what we see to form a conclusion, to establish a conviction. Accept the conclusion. Act on it. Descartes, Berkeley, and others have demonstrated that the external world is relative to our perception. "Things are such as they are only because the organs of perception are such as they are." Our world is what it is because we are what

we are; history and experience tell you this is true. Why not believe the best and the highest? Begin with some simple affirmation: "There is a greater tendency toward good than toward evil." If you have made a sincere affirmation, you will find external circumstances verifying your belief. You will see more good than evil. The force of your belief will call more good than evil into being. You will be happier with yourself, for you are participating in what is good. Worthy influences flow from you and, returning, give you a sense of well-being. You now have less and less desire to escape from yourself, and you are becoming a rather nice person to be with.

Let me point out one aspect of believing in the goodness of life and in the supremacy of spiritual values. Such convictions, to have vital significance, must be personal for you. They must be confessions of faith in your aloneness. But they have their richest significance only as you associate them with a power and a purpose outside and beyond yourself. Speaking personally, I find them validated by the most objective evaluation I can make. They have a special luminous and a freeing quality because they are seen to be aligned with God. It is not just *my* belief; it is the intention of that ultimate intention that works for righteousness. In my believing, I not only participate with the divine purpose, but I also share in the lives of those who have so believed across the centuries and who will so believe in the future. My belief, though deeply personal, does not isolate me in my aloneness; it creates a sustaining togetherness.

Another aspect of this experience, worthy of mention, is that it both frees you from unnecessary responsibility and sharpens the areas where you are responsible.

To grasp some facet of truth makes some feel they must illuminate the world. Such people may be moved to despair

when they see how impossible this is, how indifferently the world receives their bright intentions. The realization that you alone can't do everything saves you from such ill-advised dreams. This wholesome resignation which provides, in the words of Bertrand Russell, "a protection . . . against the disappointments and disillusionments to which the self-deceiver is liable," comes when you feel your beliefs are a part of a master plan. You have a role to fill, but the total responsibility does not rest solely with you.

One of the greatest contributions in the realm of the physical sciences was made by Copernicus. He discovered and proved that the earth was not the immovable center of the universe, but merely one of many satellites of the sun. Think of that analogy in terms of your own most profound beliefs. They are participators in the vast and majestic system of the spiritual world. But the mysterious and endless world of thought and spirit does not gravitate around you. You further its unknown purpose as you keep in your orbit. In your isolation you feel the comfort of participation with that which is moving to some great end. Yours is the peace and the vitality that comes from believing.

Happiness with oneself comes also through a responsiveness to life that is characterized by three factors: expressing gratitude; having the courage to be cheerful; and fulfilling the duty to be positive. These are all manifestations of what you believe. Thought precedes and forms the quality of your action. As you believe in the goodness of life, you will express appreciation for what goodness you experience. Convinced of the supremacy of higher spiritual values, you will be optimistic, cheerful, positive.

One of the finest minds developed in America was that of William James. Out of his thinking and belief came a beauti-

fully appreciative spirit. One of the most charming letters in any collection of the *World's Greatest Epistles* should be a letter by William James written to students of Radcliffe in gratitude for a plant they had given him. When John Tyndall visited America on lecture tour James said with gracious enthusiasm, "Speaking for myself, I know I am a different man and a better man for having heard and known John Tyndall."

Only a spirit clothed with a responsive contentment is free to say, "Thank you." How little such graciousness costs! Yet how deep are the blessings that come to the one who who pays it! He will not be alone. His appreciation touches and draws all good men closer to him.

Let me tell you about a lecture William James gave at Chautauqua, New York, in 1902. Bearing the title, "On a Certain Blindness in Human Nature," his thesis was that our evaluation of the worth of things depends on the feelings those things arouse in us. Mr. James richly illustrated how men can be "blind" to the feelings of dumb animals, to people different from themselves. This blindness brings wars between nations and bitterness between husband and wife, because affectionate appreciation is lacking. He told of a drive he made along the North Carolina coast with a mountaineer. He saw squalor, miserable huts, poor patches of land won from the brush around the inlets from the sea. He confessed his thinking: "Surely life amid this hideous ugliness, these stumps, weeds, and fallen trees, with pigs and chickens feeding at the very door, with none of the great heritages of the ages and the spoils of culture to enrich it, must be unbearable. There is nothing here that a human being can appreciate, nothing that means anything." Such rumination led him to ask the mountaineer, "What can life possibly mean to people who live amid these surroundings?" The

native replied with warmth and pride, "We ain't happy here unless we are getting one of these coves under cultivation."

Then James saw the truth: *he* was "blind." The cultivated philosopher had been failing to appreciate what to the mountaineer spelled achievement, victory. Every stump, every chink in each cabin, meant response to opportunity and spelled progress. Our blindness, James goes on to say, is in the failure to see that "wherever any process of life communicates eagerness to him who lives it," life to that individual is worthwhile. It warrants our appreciation. Albert Edward Wiggam's lovely prose adds to this picture:

"Even in the midst of what may seem to us to be miserable surroundings or days fraught only with pain, as long as one's heart beats with eagerness, his life is touched with adventure. It is perfumed, even if ever so faintly, with the stimulating fragrance of hope. . . . the measure of a man's life and happiness is just the measure of his appreciations. The continuous widening and deepening of his appreciation is the measure of his spiritual growth."

I can think of no more noble and significant epitaph that could mark a man's last resting place than this:

HE WAS EVER APPRECIATIVE
(*and though often he knew it not*)
HE WAS APPRECIATED BY ALL

If you and I become practitioners in the art of gratitude we are never alone. We become skilled in the trade of being men—human beings happy with ourselves.

As I see it, cheerfulness and the positive point of view are linked hand and heart with the grace of gratitude. Dorothy Thompson, writing recently in a leading woman's magazine, crystallizes her thinking on a theme similar to ours: "Happiness is a sort of continual act of faith, imposing a spon-

taneously accepted duty to be cheerful." There is no paradox in putting "duty" and "good cheer" together. It is a command for the Christian: "Be of good cheer." It is the wisdom of the ages. To every high-intentioned and reasonable individual comes the truth, "One loses nothing by living generously, nobly, courageously, with an equitable, reasonable, and, as it is termed, *royal heart*." No, nothing is lost—and everything is to be gained—by making the positive spirit the keynote of our lives.

A further ingredient that adds to contentment comes from so planning and directing one's life that one knows a sense of progress.

An old friend told me that, in his last appearance in America, Harry Lauder recounted the story of a Scottish lamplighter who, as night fell over a little highland village, went silently down the rough-rutted streets lighting, one by one, the rustic lamps. All along the way he traveled, he left a warm, hospitable, and helpful glow to guide the townsfolk who might otherwise stumble in the dark. Beloved Harry Lauder said, "That's the way I'd like to live, so that after I'm gone, there are some lights left glowing to help others along the way."

This aspect of deep happiness is open to every man. Most especially is it available to you as, without pretense, devoted to wisdom and the simplicities of life, you do what is yours to do. The ancient philosopher Anaxagoras was once asked who were the men favored by life. He answered, "You will not find happiness among those whom you think to be happy. You will find happiness among those who seem unfortunate to you: not in the midst of riches and honors, but among those who, with persevering and loyal heart, cultivate their acre of ground or the fields of useful knowledge."

Professor Morgan in his commendable study, *How to Keep a Sound Mind,* has put it tersely: "Forward a man must go if he is to fulfill the essential purpose of his life and be a happy individual." Isn't it always true that there is frustration if you feel you are standing still or that you have gone backward? But you will find yourself tied up in frustration unless you provide occasions to say in your aloneness, "Well, I have learned over the last ten years. I do a better job in my work today than I did yesterday."

If your goals are only materialistic and self-centered, you are almost surely doomed to failure. But if your aspirations and intentions are identified with larger needs and desires of humanity, the sense of gladness in moving forward is more assured. A physician at the beginning of his career aimed to make twenty-five thousand dollars annually and to have personal health to "live it up." He has exceeded his goal. But he is a sour and unhappy man. The circumscribed nature of his purpose has denied him personal and social satisfaction. Had his end been the furtherance of mankind's health or the progress of a great science, what small contributions he might have made would have had more significance.

There is great health to be gained in our aloneness if we can honestly say we have grown in spiritual comprehension and wisdom. A woman who has battled with psychological loneliness and physical pain tells me that her solitary times have been the most significant in her life. She puts it this way: "Every experience, I now realize, has disciplined me, fortified me with more endurance for the next task, and taught me to seek, to knock, to ask with patience, trust and faith, until today I feel I can truly say with joy, 'The Lord is my Shepherd,' knowing for certain that I never have been and never will be alone."

Learning of any kind that expands horizons and sharpens appreciations can bring contentment. James A. Farley took time out of his busy schedule to write me:

"Unless we are irreparably immersed in ourselves, we learn the truth and meaning of our Lord's words to His Disciples the night before He died, when He said He would not leave them orphans. Some of us learn more slowly than others, but we all learn, and with His help the day comes when we appreciate that the hard and bitter things of life are as much God's gifts as are the good, the joyful and happy things He has bestowed upon us, for they all contribute to our benefit, worldly and spiritual. And, strengthened with the understanding that such is mankind's lot, we can go on secure in the knowledge that we are never alone."

Such insight is a great spiritual landmark for a man to reach. A man who has progressed to that truth can have inner happiness.

But adventure into any one of a million fields of knowledge can help create that feeling of "going forward" and the attendant sense of happiness with oneself. Learn of different cloud formations and you savor more fully the beauty of a summer sky. Your exhilaration is keener as you watch the dark, thundering clouds of fall race across the horizon to foretell the coming of winter. As Jules Payot says, "Everything that stirs up our sensibility contributes to the vibrancy of our imagination."

Learn! Take one step on the path of knowledge. The next one comes easily. Keep walking toward the wider horizons and you will find a new world beyond each.

Then we must try to cultivate an outgoing and enthusiastic personality. You can put it down as a solid principle that to the degree you are centered only in yourself you will

be frustrated by yourself. Contrariwise, to the degree you are warm and outgoing in concern to others, your own self flowers into a congenial person. It's a curious thing about us: all our instinctive needs may be met. And we may have the added frosting of comforts and luxuries. The self which is you may be pampered as well as protected. Yet you can be starving. Jesus was right: it's only as we get away from ourselves in awareness and concern for others that we begin to understand and like ourselves.

Apply this idea in your own life and see how it works. You have children or grandchildren. You have associates and neighbors. These are definite areas of responsibility, where you have specific relationships. Are you edgy and unhappy because the children haven't appreciated you? Are letters casual and infrequent from those who are away from home? Are your feelings hurt? Are you suspicious that you are being pushed around in your office, that you are misunderstood? Are you piqued because the next-door neighbor has made no gesture of interest or hospitality? If that is the case, you are not only at sixes and sevens with other people, you are mixed up with yourself. Stay in that bog, coddle the feelings of hurt ego, and you will be caught deeper in self-pity. You're not the person you'd like to be, and in that case not happy with yourself.

Stop and say, "I certainly know the impression others make on me. What kind of impression am I making on others?" Just what is there in you that would incline someone else to send you a loving note, or invite you over for tea? If you were someone else, would you open your arms in affection and gratitude to the person you now are? The answer may be no.

But continue your thinking. Ask yourself what might happen if you did something generous and loving, even though

—yes, even though—it wasn't deserved? This works like magic. It makes this a nicer world in which to be alive. It provides you with the experience of our Lord, "My joy no man taketh from me." Your actions will be right, and no matter what the response of others may be, you'll be happier with yourself.

The cold fact is that the instinct of man is to seek the society of others for his own good. But the equally harsh fact is that if you let that instinct dominate you you'll be thwarted in getting what you desire. The truth and technique is to seek first another's good and then your own desire will be fulfilled. Listen to what others are saying and your words will be listened to. Make life worthwhile for someone else and it will be made of worth for you. Become a loving personality for others and you will be loved.

Someone has to take the initiative. Why not you? You find your desires filled as you make yourself a desirable person to those about you—outgoing, warm in your concerns, generous in your responsiveness, sensitive in your appreciations. J. H. Oldham has thoughtfully written, "The personal life is in its essence the acceptance of the responsibilities of the community. . . . To assert the supremacy of the personal is the same thing as to say that the truest and deepest meaning of life is found in encounter. Life is most real when we find ourselves confronted by another self . . ."

The necessary encounters that leave a residue of happiness for you are those where you meet the human family as an interested, outgoing member of it. Begin being that kind of person *today*. Take one step, engage in one program of thoughtfulness or appreciation, right now—not tomorrow. Several years ago a friend of mine told of looking out on the frozen landscape from a window of her upstate home. As she prepared breakfast she called over her shoulder to her husband, "Jim, before we're too old, let's go and spend

the winter in Arizona, rather than freezing up here." "Yes," he called back in response, "we must." Then she realized with a start that she and Jim were past sixty-five. A few weeks ago I saw my friend again. She hadn't gone to Arizona. Now she'll never go with Jim, for he is dead.

Cervantes said that on the street called "By-and-By" one arrives at the house of "Never." Don't put off any longer developing a serving and loving personality. The frustration of so many lives needs the refreshment you can give. And you yourself need the happiness, the vital contentment, that that kind of giving will bring back to you.

There must be inner freedom, independence, and a sense of self-sufficiency before you are really glad with yourself. I put this aspect in close connection with our important relationships to others. We can't have deep satisfaction without satisfying relations with our fellow men. Yet if our happiness is to be dependent on the results of relationships with others, we will be constantly faced with disappointment. But we must be able to rise above it.

Professor Weiman used to say to his classes at the University of Chicago, "when an individual must depend for his sense of personal worth upon the whimsical reactions of just a few of his fellows, he is apt to move from elation to dejection, from pride to confusion." So it is. You see a classic illustration of this in the character of the elder brother in the parable of the Prodigal Son. Jealousy and resentment made him feel he was getting the short end of the stick. He was too dependent on others. Deep inner content could never be his on that basis.

One of the greatest spirits I have met is that of Epictetus, a first-century Stoic philosopher, whose teachings were set down by one of his pupils. In those writings you feel a

magnificent spirit, free of worldly things, external fears, conqueror of the pains of the body and unworthy depressants to the soul. Some of the great ideals of Epictetus were self-renunciation, endurance, and limitation of desire. Learn what is yours and what is not yours, he taught. Then free yourself from any concern for the things over which you have no control. Like Jesus, he had nowhere to lay his head. Yet, like the Galilean, he leaves the impression of a magnificent aloneness that will never be alone, because every person who walks with him is enriched by a companionship that frees one from the hurts of the world.

We can all try to "Make the most of all that comes, and the least of all that goes." Plato, in his *Dialogues* reminds us, "Happiness consists in the use of a thing; not in its possession." Fridtjof Nansen, Norwegian explorer, scientist, statesman, condenses his experience: "The important thing is to do one's best and to make oneself independent of wants." Reinhold Niebuhr, in his latest volume, *The Self and the Dramas of History,* deals helpfully with the subtle but so important truth as he affirms that the human self simply cannot be its own end. "Whenever the self is oriented to its own self-realization as its *raison d'être,* its real powers are weakened and it falters even in the project of self-realization. A self becomes a self only as it is drawn out of itself by a power which can enlist devotion but which does not overwhelm the self's true freedom. When 'nature,' or 'society,' or any human power is the object of the self's highest loyalty, the result is finally self-stultifying."

All through this volume we have been discussing ways of achieving this state of independence and self-sufficiency. Warm memories and good hopes, the sense of God's presence and a growing companionship with Jesus Christ, can help build your self-reliant citadel of aloneness. There are

ageless truths and beauties, a fusing of the basic needs and hopes of men in the adventure of prayer—all of which can have their part in binding you to others, but which keep you from depending too much on them. Then there is the you within yourself through whose companionship comes the strength of personal adequacy. Do you remember Mrs. Gamp in Dickens' *Martin Chuzzlewit?* For more than thirty years Mrs. Gamp talked over all her problems with a Mrs. Harris. No reaction would be made, no action taken, until Mrs. Gamp and Mrs. Harris had a powwow. But you learn that the two are one. Mrs. Harris is an unseen partner within Mrs. Gamp. There was no need to rely on others, she had another within herself, whose cultivation freed her from loneliness and strengthened her for all eventualities.

Once again I refer to the testimony of Admiral Byrd while in complete isolation in the Antarctic. He testifies that he found "means of existence within himself . . ." His evaluations gave him balance of a high order. He found himself self-sufficient. That is a magnificent achievement each of us can make: contentment because we have found adequacy within ourselves; gladness in an aloneness that is never alone.

Another ingredient to happiness with oneself lies in the ability to say, "I tried to do my best. If tomorrow is to be mine, I shall seek to do better then than I did today." One of the most depressing drawbacks to happiness is regret. "Hell," someone has said, "is the specter of our wasted opportunities."

In defining happiness I used the adjective "animated" contentment. Animation is a synonym for life and growth. It means aliveness, sensitiveness, and responsiveness. Aliveness means effort, fulfilling the place and opportunity of the hour

and the day. If we fail in having this animated contentment between our conscious and unconscious mind, between what we are and what we desire to be, there is no happiness. Then, too, if there is no harmonious relationship between our inner self and society through outgoing affections and wisely controlled concerns, our content will be negative.

Bertrand Russell has given us a fine concept of the contented man. "The happy man is the man . . . whose personality is neither divided against itself nor pitted against the world. Such a man feels himself a citizen of the universe, enjoying freely the spectacle that it offers and the joys that it affords, untroubled by the thought of death because he feels himself not really separate from those who will come after him. It is in such profound instinctive union with the stream of life that the greatest joy is to be found."

This is the ideal picture. But are you living within that framework? Thought and effort today will begin to put you there. The poet of Gaul, Ausonius, admonished, "Begin your work." Then comes his comforting assurance, "To begin is to complete the first half. The second half remains: begin again and the work is done." If you've failed in satisfying yourself, "begin your work." You will probably find that, in cultivating your soul, the task is never finished. But you'll like it that way. Ausonius' promise applies only in small and prescribed areas. With your mind and soul there are new frontiers with every step you take. But few joys are sweeter than to be able to say, "I'm on the way. I may have a long way to go. But I've taken the first and hardest steps."

You have to keep at it. The way is hard. "In the path of every pilgrim to the Celestial City (of happiness) stand from time to time the giant figures of Death and Pain, and shake their spears, saying, 'Wilt thou dare?' " You will dare, and

dare again. You know that you are not alone. You know that

> [It is no] small a thing
> To have enjoyed the sun,
> To have lived in the spring,
> To have loved, to have thought, to have done;
> To have advanced true friends, and beat down
> baffling foes.

Your heart is alive with higher hopes. Immortal truth, the ageless arms of Providential care, and the superb manhood of Christ are as near as your need. All mankind goes with you as you, through the mystic vehicle of prayer, go with all mankind.

Here are valuable guides of truth from the Bible for you as you go on your way:

Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.

But let every man prove his own work, and *then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.*

For every man shall bear his own burden.

I cannot say "Farewell," for have we not learned in our seeking together that *We Are Never Alone?*

Some Additional Writings of Interest

The volumes that follow have, together with many others, been consulted in the preparation of the manuscript of *You Are Never Alone*. With deep appreciation I acknowledge the contributions that these works have made to this volume. The books that have received particular attention in my study or which have been quoted at some length are noted by an asterisk.

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(continued from front flap)

On the other hand, Dr. Ditzen points out, loneliness can be a liability. It can drag the spirit down into "the blackest of nights that denies reason and truth and wisdom." Those who have given way to this negation are the spiritual invalids who sit endless hours in waiting rooms of the physician or psychiatrist rehearsing silent litanies of symptoms or woes.

This is the wasteland of bitter isolation in which Dr. Ditzen sets up his signposts – signposts pointing the way to self-fulfillment and personal peace.

He writes of the hidden heroes of the heart, people like the gallant French nurse who chose to remain by the troops in the carnage at Dienbienphu; and he shows how these heroic figures symbolize yesterday's memories and tomorrow's hopes, the self you have been and the self you might become. And in the end a simple faith alone may make us aware of God.

YOU ARE NEVER ALONE is a fascinating and inspiring book. Its pages are peopled with the historical greats of philosophy, religion, and art – as well as beloved figures of our own day. Here are the words and wise thoughts of Shakespeare, Kant, Bach, and Lincoln; Dostoievski, Schweitzer, St. Paul, and Carl Sandburg; Harry Lauder, Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt, Anne Morrow Lindbergh, and Mary Margaret McBride – among many others.

Through his sincere and perceptive interpretation of their lives and of his own, Dr. Ditzen says to everyone stricken by the fear of a lonely tomorrow: Take heart, look within, and walk in all your natural dignity and grace.

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Dr. Lowell Russell Ditzen is Pastor of the Reformed Church in Bronxville, New York. Besides *Personal Security Through Faith* he has written scores of articles for church magazines, including *The Presbyterian* and *The Christian Century*. In 1948 Dr. Ditzen was Exchange Preacher under the Federal Council of Churches of the United States and Great Britain, during which period he traveled throughout England, Scotland, and France.

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